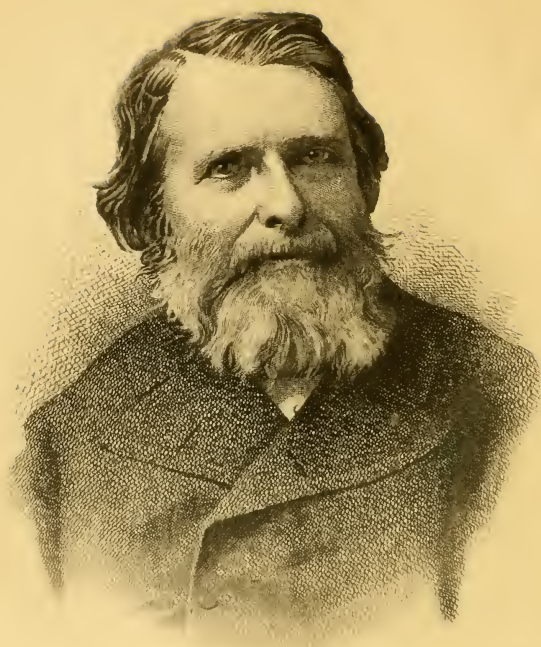


Nature Studies
— from Ruskin —

Rose Porter





Nature Studies

Selections from
the Writings of

John Ruskin

Chosen and
Arranged by

Rose Porter



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. NATURE STUDIES	9
II. NATURE AND ART	47
III. SKY AND CLOUD	83
IV. ABOUT THE EARTH	127
V. JEWELS OF THE EARTH	159
VI. THE MOUNTAIN KINGDOM	181 ✓
VII. ABOUT WATER	221 ✓
VIII. COLOR STUDIES	249
IX. TREES AND THEIR MINISTRY	273 ✓
X. PLANTS AND FLOWERS	299 ✓
XI. GRASS, MOSS AND LICHEN	343 ✓
XII. A CHARM OF BIRDS	359 ✓

INTRODUCTION.

THE general impression about volumes of selections is, perhaps, correct, namely; — that their object is, that by one individual's careful research many individuals may be enabled to obtain a superficial knowledge of an author's writings.

This volume of "Nature Studies" has been compiled with no such intention. On the contrary, its object is simply to serve as a guide to the rich harvests about "the universe of visible things which have no faculty of speech," but which are ripe for gleaning in John Ruskin's complete works. Hence the compiler's choice of extracts has been made to suggest the wealth of truth and beauty to be found, and to awaken a thirst for fuller knowledge of these treasures rather than to satisfy that thirst. This

explains why, in many cases, the quotations may seem fragmentary and abrupt. But in every instance they can be verified and amplified by reference to the Illustrated Cabinet Edition of John Ruskin's Works published by Dana Estes and Company.

THE truth of Nature is a part of the truth of God: to him who does not search it out, darkness, as it is to him who does infinity.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Part II, Chap. II, p. 129.

THE whole heart of Nature seems thirsting to give, and still to give.

— *In Montibus Sanctis*, Chap. II, p. 131.

NATURE STUDIES.

I.

NATURE STUDIES.

THE living inhabitation of the world—the grazing and nesting in it,—the spiritual power of the air, the rocks, the waters,—to be in the midst of it, and rejoice and wonder at it, and help it if I could,—happier if it needed no help of mine,—this was the essential love of *Nature* in me, this the root of all that I have usefully become, and the light of all that I have rightly learned.

—*Præterita*, Vol. I, Chap. IX, p. 142.

As the art of life is learned, it will be found at last that all lovely things are also necessary:—the wild flower by the wayside, as well as the tended corn; and the wild birds and creatures of the forest, as well as the tended cattle: because man doth not live by bread only, but also by the desert manna: by every wondrous word and unknowable work of God.

—*Unto This Last*, Essay IV, p. 224.

IF we take full view of the matter, we shall find that the love of Nature, wherever it has existed, has been a faithful and sacred element of human feeling; that is to say, supposing all circumstances otherwise the same with respect to two individuals, the one who loves nature most will be *always* found to have more *faith in* God than the other. It is intensely difficult, owing to the confusing and counter influences which always mingle in the data of the problem, to make this abstraction fairly; but so far as we can do it, so far, I boldly assert, the result is constantly the same; the nature-worship will be found to bring with it such a sense of the presence and power of a Great Spirit as no mere reasoning can either induce or controvert; and where that nature-worship is innocently pursued,—i. e., with due respect to other claims on time, feeling, and exertion, and associated with the higher principles of religion,—it becomes the channel of certain sacred truths, which by no other means can be conveyed.

. . . Instead of supposing the love of Nature necessarily connected with the faithlessness of the age, I believe it is connected properly with the benevolence and liberty of the age; that it is precisely the most

healthy element which distinctively belongs to us; and that out of it, cultivated no longer in levity or ignorance, but in earnestness and as a duty, results will spring of an importance at present inconceivable; and lights arise, which, for the first time in man's history, will reveal to him the true nature of his life, the true field for his energies, and the true relations between him and his Maker.

—*Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Part IV, Chap. XVII, p. 375, 376.

IDEAS of beauty are among the noblest which can be presented to the human mind, invariably exalting and purifying it according to their degree; and it would appear that we are intended by the Deity to be constantly under their influence, because there is not one single object in Nature which is not capable of conveying them, and which, to the rightly perceiving mind, does not present an incalculably greater number of beautiful than of deformed parts; there being in fact scarcely anything, in pure, undiseased nature, like positive deformity, but only degrees of beauty, or such slight and rare points of permitted contrast as may render all around them more valuable by their opposition, spots of blackness in creation, to make its colors felt.

—*Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Part I, Sect. I, Chap. VI, p. 102.

WHENEVER people don't look at Nature, they always think they can improve her.

— *The Two Paths*, Lecture I, p. 22.

THE real majesty of the appearance of the thing to us, depends upon the degree in which we ourselves possess the power of understanding it,—that penetrating, possession-taking power of the imagination—the very life of the man, considered as a *seeing* creature. . . .

Examine the nature of your own emotion, (if you feel it) at the sight of the Alp, and you will find all the brightness of that emotion hanging, like dew on gossamer, on a curious web of subtle fancy and imperfect knowledge.

First, you have a vague idea of its size, coupled with wonder at the work of the great Builder of its walls and foundations, then an apprehension of its eternity, a pathetic sense of its perpetualness, and your own transientness, as of the grass upon its sides; then, and in this very sadness, a sense of strange companionship with past generations in seeing what they saw. They did not see the clouds that are floating over your head; nor the cottage wall on the other side of the field; nor the road by which you are

travelling. But they saw *that*. The wall of granite in the heavens was the same to them as to you. They have ceased to look upon it; you will soon cease to look also, and the granite wall will be for others. Then, mingled with these more solemn imaginations, come the understandings of the gift and glories of the Alps, the fancying forth of all the fountains that well from its rocky walls, and strong rivers that are born out of its ice, and of all the pleasant valleys that wind between its cliffs, and all the châteaux that gleam among its clouds, and happy farmsteads couched upon its pastures; while together with the thoughts of these, rise strange sympathies with all the unknown of human life, and happiness, and death, signified by that narrow white flame of the everlasting snow, seen so far in the morning sky.

These images, and far more than these, lie at the root of the emotion which you feel at the sight of the Alp.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Part IV, Chap. X, p. 176.

By the Word, or Voice, or Breath, or Spirit, the heavens and earth, and all the host of them, were made; and in it they exist. It is your life; and speaks to you always, so long as you live nobly. . . . It

may come to you in clouds — it may come to you in the stillness of deserts.

— *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. II, Letter XXXVI, p. 121.

UNDER natural conditions the degree of mental excitement necessary to bodily health is provided by the course of the seasons, and the various skill and fortune of agriculture. In the country every morning of the year brings with it a new aspect of springing or fading nature; a new duty to be fulfilled upon earth, and a new promise or warning in heaven. No day is without its innocent hope, its special prudence, its kindly gift and its sublime danger; and in every process of wise husbandry, and every effort of contending or remedial courage, the wholesome passions, pride, and bodily power of the laborer are excited and exerted in happiest unison:

While the divine laws of seed-time which cannot be recalled, harvests which cannot be hastened, and winter in which no man can work, compel the impatiences and coveting of his heart into labor too submissive to be anxious, and rest too sweet to be wanton. — *The Ethics of the Dust*, Lecture X, pp. 157, 158.

THE woods, which I had only looked on as wilderness, fulfilled I then saw, in their

beauty, the same laws which guided the clouds, divided the light, and balanced the wave. "He hath made everything beautiful, in his time," became for me thenceforward the interpretation of the bond between the human mind and all visible things.

— *Prætorita*, Vol. II, Chap. IV, p. 253.

WHATEVER beauty there may result from effects of light on foreground objects, from the dew of the grass, the flash of the cascade, the glitter of the birch trunk, or the fair daylight hues of darker things (and joyfulness there is in all of them) there is yet a light which the eye invariably seeks with a deeper feeling of the beautiful, the light of the declining or breaking day, and the flakes of scarlet cloud burning like watch-fires in the green sky of the horizon; a deeper feeling, I say, not perhaps more acute, but having more of spiritual hope and longing.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part III, Sect. I, Chap. V, p. 265.

AMONG the hours of his life to which the writer looks back with peculiar gratitude, as having been marked by more than ordinary fulness of joy or clearness of teaching, is one passed, now some years ago, near time of

sunset, among the broken masses of pine forest which skirt the course of the Ain, above the village of Champagnole, in the Jura. It is a spot which has all the solemnity, with none of the savageness, of the Alps; where there is a sense of a great power beginning to be manifested in the earth, and of a deep and majestic concord in the rise of the long low lines of piny hills; the first utterance of those mighty mountain symphonies, soon to be more loudly lifted and wildly broken along the battlements of the Alps. But their strength is as yet restrained; and the far-reaching ridges of pastoral mountain succeed each other, like the long and sighing swell which moves over quiet waters from some far-off stormy sea. And there is a deep tenderness pervading that vast monotony. The destructive forces and the stern expression of the central ranges are alike withdrawn. No frost-ploughed, dust-encumbered paths of ancient glacier fret the soft Jura pastures: no splintered heaps of ruin break the fair ranks of her forests; no pale, defiled, or furious rivers send their rude and changeful ways among her rocks. Patiently, eddy by eddy, the clear streams wind along their well-known beds; and under the dark quiet-

ness of the undisturbed pines, there springs up, year by year, such company of joyful flowers as I know not the like of among all the blessings of the earth. It was Spring-time, too; and all were coming forth in clusters crowded for very love; there was room enough for all, but they crushed their leaves into all manner of strange shapes only to be nearer each other. There was the wood anemone, star after star, closing every now and then into *nebulæ*; and there was the oxalis, troop by troop like virginal processions of the *Mois de Marie*, the dark vertical clefts in the limestone choked up with them as with heavy snow, and touched with ivy on the edges—ivy as light and lovely as the vine; and ever and anon, a blue gush of violets, and cowslip bells in sunny places; and in the more open ground, the vetch, and comfrey, and mezereon, and the small sapphire buds of the *Polygala Alpina*, and the wild strawberry, just a blossom or two, all showered amidst the golden softness of deep, warm, amber-colored moss. I came out presently on the edge of the ravine; the solemn murmur of its waters rose suddenly from beneath, mixed with the singing of the thrushes among the pine boughs; and on

the opposite side of the valley, walled all along as it was by grey cliffs of limestone, there was a hawk sailing slowly off their brow, touching them nearly with his wings, and with the shadow of the pines flickering upon his plumage from above; but with a fall of a hundred fathoms under his breast, and the curling pools of the green river gliding and glittering dizzily beneath him, their foam globes moving with him as he flew.

— *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Chap. VI, p. 168.

THE truths of Nature are one eternal change — one infinite variety. There is no bush on the face of the globe exactly like another bush; there are no two trees in the forest whose boughs bend into the same network; nor two leaves on the same tree which could not be told one from the other, nor two waves in the sea exactly alike.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Part II, Sect. I, Chap. II, p. 134.

FOR every distance from the eye there is a peculiar kind of beauty, or a different system of lines of form: the sight of that beauty is reserved for that distance, and for that alone. If you approach nearer, that kind of beauty is lost, and another succeeds, to be dis-

organised and reduced to strange incomprehensible means and appliances in its turn. If you desire to perceive the great harmonies of the form of a rocky mountain, you must not ascend upon its sides. All there is disorder and accident, or seems so: sudden starts of its shattered beds hither and thither; ugly struggles of unexpected strength from under the ground; fallen fragments, toppling one over another into more helpless fall. Retire from it, and, as your eye commands it more and more, as you see the ruined mountain world with a wider glance, behold! dim sympathies begin to busy themselves in the disjointed mass; line binds itself into stealthy fellowship with line; group by group, the helpless fragments gather themselves into ordered companies; new captains of hosts and masses of battalions become visible, one by one, and far away answers of foot to foot, and of bone to bone, until the powerless chaos is seen risen up with girded loins, and not one piece of all the unregard heap could now be spared from the mystic whole. — *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. XXI, p. 245.

THE work of the great spirit of Nature is as deep and unapproachable in the lowest as in the noblest objects — the Divine Mind is

as visible in its full energy of operation on every lowly bank and mouldering stone, as in the lifting of the pillars of heaven, and settling the foundation of the earth. And to the rightly perceiving mind, there is the same infinity, the same majesty, the same power, the same unity, and the same perfection, manifest in the casting of the clay as in the scattering of the cloud, in the mouldering of the dust as in the kindling of the day-star.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part II, Sect. IV, Chap. IV, p. 91.

THE Val di Niévole is some five miles wide by thirty long, and is simply one field of corn or rich grassland. . . . There are poppies and bright ones, too, about the banks and roadsides; but the corn of Val di Niévole is too proud to grow with poppies, and is set with wild gladiolus instead, deep violet. Here and there a mound of crag rises out of the fields, crested with stone-pine, and studded all over with large stars of the white rock-cistus. Quiet streams, filled with the close crowds of the golden water-flag, wind beside meadows painted with purple orchis. On each side of the great plain is a wilderness of hills veiled at their feet with a gray cloud of olive woods.

— *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. I, Letter XVIII, p. 239.

THE peculiar levity with which natural scenery is regarded by a large number of modern minds cannot be considered as entirely characteristic of the age, inasmuch as it never can belong to the greatest intellects.

Men of any high mental power must be serious, whether in ancient or modern days; a certain degree of reverence for fair scenery is found in all our great writers without exception. . . .

It is only the dull, the uneducated, or the worldly, whom it is painful to meet on the hill sides.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Part IV, Chap. XVI, p. 326.

It is not sufficient that the facts or the features of Nature be around us, while they are not within us. We may walk day by day through grove and meadow, and scarcely know more concerning them than is known by bird and beast, that the one has shade for the head, and the other softness for the foot. It is not true that "the eye, it cannot choose but see," unless we obey the following condition, and go forth "in a wise passiveness," free from that plague of our own hearts which brings the shadow of ourselves, and the tumult of our petty interests and impa-

tient passions, across the light and calm of Nature. We do not sit at the feet of our mistress to listen to her teachings; but we seek her only to drag from her that which may suit our purpose, to see in her the confirmation of a theory, or find in her fuel for our pride. . . .

You may rest assured that those who do not care for Nature, *cannot* see her. A few of her phenomena lie on the surface: the nobler number lie deep, and are the reward of watching and of thought.

— *Arrows of the Chace*, Letter I, pp. 31, 32.

NATURE keeps whatever she has done best, close sealed, until it is regarded with reverence.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Part IV, Chap. V, p. 100.

ALTHOUGH in all lovely nature, there is, first, an excellent degree of simple beauty, addressed to the eye alone, yet often what impresses us most will form but a very small portion of that visible beauty. That beauty may, for instance, be composed of lovely flowers and glittering streams, and blue sky, and white clouds; and yet the thing which impresses us most, and which we should be sorriest to lose, may be a thin gray film

on the extreme horizon, not so large, in the space of the scene it occupies, as a piece of gossamer on a near at hand bush, nor in any wise prettier to the eye than the gossamer; but, because the gossamer is known by us for a little bit of spider's work, and the other gray film is known to mean a mountain ten thousand feet high, inhabited by a race of noble mountaineers, we are solemnly impressed by the aspect of it; and yet, all the while the thoughts and knowledge which cause us to receive this impression are so obscure that we are not conscious of them.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Part IV, Chap. XVII, p. 353.

IF it is not human design you are looking for, there is more beauty in the next wayside bank than in all the sun-blackened paper you could collect in a lifetime. Go and look at the real landscape, and take care of it; do not think you can get the good of it in a black stain portable in a folio. But if you care for human thought and passion, then learn yourselves to watch the course and fall of the light by whose influence you live, and to share in the joy of human spirits in the heavenly gifts of sunbeam and shade. For I tell you truly, that to a quiet heart, and healthy brain, and industrious hand there is

more delight, and use, in the dappling of one wood-glade, with flowers and sunshine, than to the restless, heartless, and idle could be brought by a panorama of a belt of the world, photographed round the equator.

— *Lectures on Art*, Lecture VI, p. 310.

I AM Utopian and enthusiastic enough to believe that the time will come when the world will discover and understand that God paints the clouds and shapes the moss-fibres, that men may be happy in seeing Him at His work, and that in resting quietly beside Him, and watching His working, and,—according to the power He has communicated to ourselves, and the guidance He grants,—in carrying out His purposes of peace and charity among all His creatures, are the only real happinesses that ever were, or will be, possible to mankind.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Part IV, Chap. XVII, p. 381.

THE study of Natural History is one eminently addressed to the active energies of body and mind. Nothing is to be got out of it by dreaming, not always much by thinking. It is work for the hills and fields,—work of foot and hand, knife and hammer.

— *Arrows of the Chace*, Letter VI, p. 133.

LAST autumn I saw something bright; low sunshine at six o'clock of an October morning, glancing down a long bank of fern covered with hoar-frost . . . I noted it as more beautiful than anything I had ever seen, to my remembrance, in gladness and infinitude of light.

— *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. I, Letter XV, p. 204.

THOUGH Nature is constantly beautiful, she does not exhibit her highest powers of beauty constantly, for then they would satiate us and pall upon our senses. It is necessary to their appreciation that they should be rarely shown. Her finest touches are things that must be watched for; her most perfect passages of beauty are the most evanescent. She is constantly doing something beautiful for us, but it is something which she has not done before and will not do again: some exhibition of her general powers in particular circumstances which, if we do not catch at the instant it is passing, will not be repeated for us.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Part II, Sect. I, Chap. IV, p. 146.

You may enjoy a thing legitimately because it is rare, and cannot be seen often (as you do a fine aurora, or a sunset, or an unusually

lovely flower): that is Nature's way of stimulating your attention.

—*Aratra Pentelici*, Lecture I, p. 298.

LANDSCAPE seems hardly to have exercised any strong influence, as such, on any pagan nation, or pagan artist. I have no time to enter into any details on this, of course, most intricate and difficult subject; but I will only ask you to observe, that wherever natural scenery is alluded to by the ancients, it is either agriculturally, with the kind of feeling that a good Scotch farmer has; sensually, in the enjoyment of sun or shade, cool winds or sweet scents; fearfully, in a mere vulgar dread of rocks (dna) desolate places, as compared with the comfort of cities; or finally, superstitiously, in the personification or deification of natural powers generally with much degradation of their impressiveness, as in the paltry fables of Ulysses receiving the wind bags from Æolus, and of the Cyclops hammering lightning sharp at the ends on an anvil.

Of course you will here and there find feeble evidences of a higher sensibility, chiefly, I think, in Plato, Æschylus, Aristophanes, and Virgil. Homer, though in the epithets he applies to landscape always

thoroughly graphic, uses the same epithet for rocks, seas, and trees, from one end of his poem to the other, evidently without the smallest interest in anything of the kind; and in the mass of heathen writers the absence of sensation on these subjects is singularly painful. For instance, in that, to my mind, most disgusting of all so-called poems, the journey to Brundisium, you remember that Horace takes exactly as much interest in the scenery he is passing through, as Sancho Panza would have done. You will find on the other hand, that the language of the Bible is specifically distinguished from all other early literature, by its delight in natural imagery; and that the dealings of God with His people are calculated peculiarly to awaken this sensibility within them; and that scenery is associated in their minds with the immediate manifestation and presence of the Divine Power . . . and their literature is full of expressions, not only testifying a vivid sense of the power of Nature over man, but showing that *sympathy with natural things themselves*, as if they had human souls, which is the especial characteristic of true love of the works of God.

— *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, Lecture III, p. 289.

I WAS up by the mill-stream this evening, and climbed to the right of it, up among the sloping waves of grass. I never was so struck by their intense beauty,—the masses of walnut shading them with their broad, cool, clearly-formed foliage; the glossy gray stems of the cherry trees, as if bound round tight with satin, twining and writhing against the shadows: the tall pollards of oak set here and there in the soft banks, as if to show their smoothness by contrast, yet themselves beautiful, rugged, and covered with deep brown and bright silver moss. Here and there a chestnut—sharp, and soft, and starry; and always the steep banks, one above another, melting into terraces of pure velvet, gilded with corn: here and there a black—jet black—crag of slate breaking into a frown above them, and mouldering away down into the gloomy torrent, fringed on its opposite edge, a grisly cliff, with delicate birch and pine, rising against the snow light of Mount Blanc.

— *Præterita*, Vol. II, Chap. XI, p. 364.

THE charts of the world which have been drawn up by modern science have thrown into a narrow space the expression of a vast amount of knowledge, but I have

never yet seen any one pictorial enough to enable the spectator to imagine the kind of contrast in physical character which exists between Northern and Southern countries. We know the difference in detail, but we have not that broad glance and grasp which would enable us to feel them in their fulness. We know that gentians grow on the Alps, and olives on the Apennines; but we do not enough conceive for ourselves that variegated mosaic of the world's surface which a bird sees in its migration, that difference between the district of the gentian and of the olive which the stork and the swallow see far off, as they lean upon the sirocco wind. Let us, for a moment, try to raise ourselves even above the level of their flight, and imagine the Mediterranean lying beneath us like an irregular lake, and all its ancient promontories sleeping in the sun; here and there an angry spot of thunder, a gray stain of storm, moving upon the burning field; and here and there a fixed wreath of white volcano smoke, surrounded by its circle of ashes; but for the most part a great peacefulness of light, Syria and Greece, Italy and Spain, laid like pieces of a golden pavement into the sea-blue,

chased, as we stoop nearer to them, with bossy beaten work of mountain chains, and glowing softly with terraced gardens, and flowers heavy with frankincense, mixed among masses of laurel, and orange and plummy palm, that abate with their gray-green shadows the burning of the marble rocks, and of the ledges of porphyry, sloping under lucent sand. Then let us pass farther towards the north, until we see the orient colors change gradually into a vast belt of rainy green, where the pastures of Switzerland and poplar valleys of France, and dark forests of the Danube and Carpathians stretch from the mouths of the Loire to those of the Volga, seen through clefts in gray swirls of rain-cloud and flaky veils of the mist of the brooks, spreading low along the pasture lands; and then, farther north still, to see the earth heave into mighty masses of leaden rock and heathy moor, bordering with a broad waste of gloomy purple that belt of field and wood, and splintering into irregular and grisly islands amidst the northern seas, beaten by storm and chilled by ice-drift, and tormented by furious pulses of contending tide, until the roots of the last forests fail from among the hill ravines, and

the hunger of the north wind bites their peaks into barrenness; and, at last, the wall of ice, durable like iron, sets, death-like, its white teeth against us out of the polar twilight.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. II, Chap. VI, pp. 156, 157.

It had been wild weather when I left Rome, and all across the Campagna the clouds were sweeping in sulphurous blue, with a clap of thunder or two, and breaking gleams of sun along the Claudian aqueduct lighting up the infinity of its arches like the bridge of chaos. But as I climbed the long slope of the Alban mount, the storm swept finally to the north, and the noble outlines of the domes of Albano and graceful darkness of its ilex grove rose against pure streaks of alternate blue and amber, the upper sky gradually flushing through the last fragments of rain-cloud in deep, palpitating azure, half ether and half dew. The noon-day sun came slanting down the rocky slopes of La Riccia, and its masses of entangled and tall foliage, whose autumnal tints were mixed with the wet verdure of a thousand evergreens, were penetrated with it as with rain. I cannot call it color, it was conflagra-

tion. Purple, and crimson, and scarlet, like the curtains of God's tabernacle, the rejoicing trees sank into the valley in showers of light, every separate leaf quivering with buoyant and burning life; each, as it turned to reflect or to transmit the sunbeam, first a torch and then an emerald. Far up into the recesses of the valley, the green vistas arched like the hollows of mighty waves of some crystalline sea, with the arbutus flowers dashed along their flanks for foam, and silver flakes of orange spray tossed into the air around them, breaking over the gray walls of rock into a thousand separate stars, fading and kindling alternately as the weak wind lifted and let them fall. Every blade of grass burned like the golden floor of heaven, opening in sudden gleams as the foliage broke and closed above it, as sheet-lightning opens in a cloud at sunset: the motionless masses of dark rock—dark though flushed with scarlet lichen,—casting their quiet shadows across its restless radiance, the fountain underneath them filling its marble hollow with blue mist and fitful sound, and over all—the multitudinous bars of amber and rose, the sacred clouds that have no darkness, and only exist to illumine, were seen in

fathomless intervals between the solemn and orbéd repose of the stone pines, passing to lose themselves in the last, white, blinding lustre of the measureless line where the Campagna melted into the blaze of the sea.

—*Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Part II, Sect. II, Chap. II, pp. 256, 257.

THERE is not a cluster of weeds growing in any cranny of ruin which has not a beauty in all respects *nearly* equal, and, in some, immeasurably superior, to that, of the most elaborate sculpture of its stones.

—*Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Chap. III, p. 56.

WITH us, observe, the idea of the Divinity is apt to get separated from the life of nature; and imagining our God upon a cloudy throne, far above the earth, and not in the flowers or waters, we approach those visible things with a theory that they are dead, governed by physical laws, and so forth. But coming to them, we find the theory fail; that they are not dead; that, say what we choose about them, the instinctive sense of their being alive is too strong for us; and in scorn of all physical law, the wilful fountain sings, and the kindly flowers rejoice. And then, puzzled and yet happy; pleased, and

yet ashamed of being so ; accepting sympathy from nature, which we do not believe it gives, and giving sympathy to nature, which we do not believe it receives,—mixing, besides, all manner of purposeful play and conceit with their involuntary fellowships,—we fall necessarily into the curious web of hesitating sentiment, pathetic fallacy, and wandering fancy, which form a great part of our modern view of nature.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Part IV, Chap. XIII, p. 229.

THE simplest forms of Nature are strangely animated by the sense of the Divine presence; the trees and flowers seem all, in a sort children of God.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Part IV, Chap. XVII, p. 383.

Look at the crest of the Alp, from the far-away plains over which its light is cast, whence human souls have communion with it by their myriads. The child looks up to it in the dawn, and the husbandman in the burden and heat of the day, and the old man in the going down of the sun, and it is to them all as the celestial city on the world's horizon; dyed with the depth of heaven and clothed with the calm of eternity. There was it set, for holy dominion, by Him who marked for

the sun his journey, and bade the moon know her going down. It was built for its place in the far-off sky; approach it, and as the sound of the voice of man dies away about its foundations, and the tide of human life, shallowed upon the vast ærial shore, is at last met by the Eternal "Here shall thy waves be stayed," the glory of its aspect fades into blanched fearfulness; its purple walls are rent into grisly rocks, its silver fretwork saddened into wasting snow, the storm-brands of ages are on its breast, the ashes of its own ruin lie solemnly on its white raiment.

—*The Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. XXI, p. 244.

I do not know that there is a district in the world more calculated to illustrate this power of the expectant imagination, than that which surrounds the city of Fribourg in Switzerland, extending from it towards Berne.

It is an undulating district of gray sandstone, never attaining any considerable height, but having enough of the mountain spirit to throw itself into continual succession of bold slope and dale; elevated, also, just far enough above the sea to render the pine a frequent forest tree along its irregular ridges. Through this elevated tract the

river cuts its way in a ravine some five or six hundred feet in depth, which winds for leagues between the gentle hills, unthought of, until its edge is approached: and then, suddenly through the boughs of the firs, the eye perceives, beneath, the green and gliding stream, and the broad walls of sandstone cliff that form its banks: hollowed out where the river leans against them, as it turns, into perilous overhanging, and, on the other shore, at the same spots, leaving little breadths of meadow between them and the water, half-overgrown with thicket, deserted in their sweetness, inaccessible from above, and rarely visited by any curious wanderers along the hardly traceable footpath which struggles for existence beneath the rocks. And there the river ripples and eddies and murmurs in utter solitude. It is passing through the midst of a thickly peopled country; but never was a stream so lonely. The feeblest and most far-away torrent among the high hills has its companions; the goats browse beside it; and the traveller drinks from it, and passes over it with his staff; and the peasant traces a new channel for it down to his mill-wheel. But this stream has no companions; it flows on in infinite

seclusion, not secret nor threatening, but a quietness of sweet daylight and open air,—a broad space of tender and deep desolateness, drooped into repose out of the midst of human labor and life; the waves plashing lowly, with none to hear them; and the wild birds building in the boughs, with none to fray them away; and the soft, fragrant herbs rising and breathing, and fading, with no hand to gather them;—and yet all bright and bare to the clouds above, and to the fresh fall of the passing sunshine and pure rain.

But above the brows of those scarped cliffs, all is in an instant changed. A few steps only beyond the firs that stretch their branches, angular, and wild, and white, like forks of lightning, into the air of the ravine, and we are in an arable country of the most perfect richness; the swathes of its corn glowing and burning from field to field: its pretty hamlets all vivid with fruitful orchards and flowery gardens, and goodly with steep-roofed storehouse and barn; its well-kept, hard, park-like roads rising and falling from hillside to hillside, or disappearing among brown banks of moss, and thicket of the wild raspberry and rose; or gleaming through lines of tall trees, half glade, half avenue,

where the gate opens, or the gateless path turns trustfully aside, unhindered, into the garden of some statelier house, surrounded in rural pride with its golden hives, and carved granaries, and irregular domain of latticed and espaliered cottages, gladdening to look upon in their delicate homeliness — delicate, yet, in some sort, rude. . . . For there is an untamed strength even in all that soft and habitable land. It is, indeed, gilded with corn and fragrant with deep grass, but it is not subdued to the plough or the scythe. It gives at its own free will,— it seems to have nothing wrested from it nor conquered from it. It is not redeemed from desertness, but unrestrained in fruitfulness,— a generous land, bright with capricious plenty, and laughing from vale to vale in fitful fulness, kind and wild; nor this without some sterner elements mingled in the heart of it. For along all its ridges stand the dark masses of innumerable pines, taking no part in its gladness, asserting themselves forever as fixed shadows, not to be pierced or banished even in the intensest sunlight: fallen flakes and fragments of the night, stayed in their solemn squares in the midst of all the rosy bendings of the orchard boughs, and yellow effulgence of the harvest, and tracing them-

selves in black network and motionless fringes against the blanched blue of the horizon in its saintly clearness. And yet they do not sadden the landscape, but seem to have been set there chiefly to show how bright everything else is round them; and all the clouds look of purer silver, and all the air seems filled with a whiter and more living sunshine, when they are pierced by the sable points of the pines; and all the pastures look of more glowing green where they run up between the purple trunks; and the sweet field foot-paths skirt the edges of the forest for the sake of its shade, sloping up and down about the slippery roots, and losing themselves every now and then hopelessly among the violets, and ground ivy, and brown sheddings of the fibrous leaves; and at last plunging into some open aisle where the light through the distant stems shows that there is a chance of coming out again on the other side, and coming out, indeed, in a little while, from the scented darkness, into the dazzling air and marvellous landscape, and stretches still farther and farther in new wilfulness of grove and garden, until, at last, the craggy mountains of Simmenthal rise out of it, sharp into the rolling of the southern clouds.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part X, Chap. XI, pp. 173-177.

THERE is a decisive instant in all matters; and if you look languidly you are sure to miss it. Nature seems always, somehow, trying to make you miss it. "I will see that through," you must say, "without turning my head"; or you won't see the trick of it at all. — *Mornings in Florence — Second Morning*, p. 28.

THAT sentence of Genesis, "I have given thee every green herb for meat," like all the rest of the book, has a profound symbolical as well as a literal meaning. It is not merely the nourishment of the body, but the food of the soul, that is intended. The green herb is, of all nature, that which is most essential to the healthy spiritual life of man. Most of us do not need fine scenery: the precipice and the mountain peak are not intended to be seen by all men,—perhaps, their power is greatest over those who are unaccustomed to them. But trees, and fields, and flowers were made for all, and are necessary for all. God has connected the labor which is essential to the bodily sustenance, with the pleasures which are healthiest for the heart: and while He made the ground stubborn, He made its herbage fragrant, and its blossoms fair. The proudest architecture that man can build has no

higher honor than to bear the image and recall the memory of that grass of the field which is, at once, the type and the support of his existence: the goodly building is then most glorious when it is sculptured into the likeness of the leaves of Paradise; and the great Gothic Spirit noble in its disquietude, is also noble in its hold of nature; it is indeed, like the dove of Noah, in that she found no rest upon the face of the waters — but like her in this also, “Lo, in her mouth was an olive branch, plucked off.”

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. II, Chap. VI, p. 202.

WE know more certainly every day that whatever appears to us harmful in the universe has some beneficent or necessary operation: that the storm which destroys a harvest brightens the sunbeams for harvests yet unsown, and that the volcano which buries a city preserves a thousand from destruction. But the evil is not for the time less fearful, because we have learned it to be necessary; and we easily understand the timidity or the tenderness of the spirit which would withdraw itself from the presence of destruction. . . . That man is greater, however, who contemplates with an equal mind the alternations of terror and of beauty; who,

not rejoicing less beneath the sunny sky, can bear also to watch the bars of twilight narrowing on the horizon, and, not less sensible to the blessing of the peace of Nature, can rejoice in the magnificence of the ordinance by which that peace is protected and secured.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. II, Chap. VI, p. 190.

“NOT enjoying the beauty of things,” goes ever so much deeper than mere blindness.

— *Hortus Inclusus*, p. 63.

THERE are few so utterly lost, but that they receive, and know that they receive, at certain moments, strength of some kind, or rebuke from the appealings of outward things; and that it is not possible for a Christian man to walk across so much as a rood of the natural earth, with mind unagitated and rightly poised, without receiving strength and hope from some stone, flower, leaf, or sound, nor without a sense of a dew falling upon him out of the sky.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part III, Sect. I, Chap. XV, p. 383.

ALL Nature, with one voice—with one glory, is set to teach you reverence for the life communicated to you from the Father

of Spirits. The song of birds, and their plumage; the scent of flowers, their color, their very existence, are in direct connection with the mystery of that communicated life.

— *The Eagle's Nest*, Lecture VIII, p. 398.

NATURE AND ART.

HAVE no fear in judging between Nature and Art, so only that you love both. If you can love one only, then let it be Nature: you are safe with her: but do not then attempt to judge the Art, to which you do not care to give thought, or time. But if you love both, you may judge between them fearlessly; you may estimate the last, by its making you remember the first, and giving you the same kind of joy.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. XXX, p. 345.

II.

NATURE AND ART.

As you know more and more of the created world, you will find that the true will of its Maker is that its creatures should be happy;—that He has made everything beautiful in its time and its place, and that it is chiefly by the fault of men, when they are allowed the liberty of thwarting His laws, that Creation groans or travails in pain. The Love of God exists, and you may see it, and live in it if you will. A Spirit does actually exist which teaches the ant her path, the bird her building, and men, in an instinctive and marvellous way, whatever lovely arts and noble deeds are possible to them. Without it you can do no good thing. . . . In the possession of it is your peace and your power.

— *Lectures on Art*, Lecture IV, p. 274.

TRUE criticism of art never can consist in the mere application of rules; it can be just only when it is founded on quick sympathy with the innumerable instincts and changeful efforts of human nature,

chastened and guided by unchanging love of all things that God has created to be beautiful, and pronounced to be good.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Part IV, Chap. II, p. 45.

FORMS are not beautiful *because* they are copied from Nature; only it is out of the power of man to conceive beauty without her aid.

— *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Chap. IV, p. 102.

THERE are some landscapes whose best character is sparkling, and there is a possibility of repose in the midst of brilliancy, or embracing it,—as on the fields of summer sea, or summer land:

“Calm, and deep peace, on this high wold,
And on the dews that drench the furze,
And on the silvery gossamers,
That twinkle into green and gold.”

And there are colorists who can keep their quiet in the midst of a jewellery of light; but, for the most part, it is better to avoid breaking up either lines or masses by too many points, and to make the few points used exceedingly precious.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. XXIX, p. 340.

HIGH art, consists neither in altering nor in improving Nature; but in seeking throughout Nature for "whatsoever things are lovely, and whatsoever things are pure"; in loving these, in displaying to the utmost of the painter's power such loveliness as is in them, and directing the thoughts of others to them by winning art, or gentle emphasis.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Part IV, Chap. III, p. 60.

THE highest art in all kinds is that which conveys the most truth.

— *Arrows of the Chace*, Vol. I, Letter VI, p. 140.

ART, followed as such, and for its own sake, irrespective of the interpretation of Nature by it, is destructive of whatever is best and noblest in humanity; but Nature however simply observed, or imperfectly known, is, in the degree of the affection felt for it, protective and helpful to all that is noblest in humanity. . . .

. . . So long as Art is steady in the contemplation and exhibition of natural facts, so long she herself lives and grows; and in her own life and growth partly implies, partly secures, that of the nation in the midst of which she is practised. . . .

Review for yourself the history of art, and you will find this to be a manifest certainty, that *no great school ever yet existed which had not for primal aim the representation of some natural fact as truly as possible.* Wheresoever the search after truth begins, there life begins; wheresoever that search ceases, there life ceases. . . .

Depend upon it, the first universal characteristic of all great art is Tenderness, as the second is Truth. . . . Seize hold of God's hand and look full in the face of His creation, and there is nothing He will not enable you to achieve.

Thus, then, you will find—and the more profound and accurate your knowledge of the history of art the more assuredly you will find—that the living power in all the real schools, be they great or small, is love of Nature.

— *The Two Paths*, Lecture I, pp. 16–30.

HE who is closest to Nature is best. All rules are useless, all labor is useless, if you do not give facts.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part IV, Chap. X, p. 172.

I SUPPOSE you will not wish me to spend any time in proving that imagination must

be vigorous in proportion to the quantity of material which it has to handle: and that, just as we increase the range of what we see, we increase the richness of what we can imagine. Granting this, consider what a field is opened to your fancy merely in the subject-matter which architecture admits. Nearly every other art is severely limited in its subjects. . . . But is there anything within range of sight, or conception, which may not be of use to *you*, or in which your interest may not be excited with advantage to your art? . . .

. . . All the wide world of vegetation blooms and bends for you; the leaves tremble that you may bid them be still under the marble snow; the thorn and the thistle, which the earth casts forth as evil, are to you the kindest servants; no dying petal, nor drooping tendril, is so feeble as to have no more help for you; no robed pride of blossom so kingly, but it will lay aside its purple to receive at your hands the pale immortality. Is there anything in common life too mean,—in common things too trivial,—to be ennobled by your touch?

As there is nothing in life, so there is nothing in lifelessness which has not its lesson for you, or its gift; and when you

are tired of watching the strength of the plume and the tenderness of the leaf, you may walk down to your rough river shore, or into the thickest markets of your thoroughfares, and there is not a piece of torn cable that will not turn into a perfect moulding. . . . Yes, and if you gather up the very sand, and break the stone on which you tread, among its fragments of all but invisible shells you will find forms that will take their place, and that proudly, among the starred traceries of your vaulting: and you, who can crown the mountain with its fortress, and the city with its towers, are thus able also to give beauty to ashes, and worthiness to dust. . . .

. . . Do not think it wasted time to submit yourselves to any influence which may bring upon you any noble feeling. Rise early, always watch the sunrise, and the way the clouds break from the dawn; you will cast your statue-draperies in quite another than your common way, when the remembrance of that cloud motion is with you, and of the scarlet vesture of the morning. Live always in the springtime in the country; you do not know what leaf-form means, unless you have seen the buds burst, and the young leaves breathing

low in the sunshine, and wondering at the first shower of rain.

— *The Two Paths*, Lecture IV, pp. 95, 96, 100.

WHERE does Nature pause in *her* finishing—that finishing which consists not in the smoothing of surface, but the filling of space, and the multiplication of life and thought?

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Part IV, Chap. IX, p. 166.

ALL most lovely forms and thoughts are directly taken from natural objects.

— *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Chap. IV, p. 101.

THE things which Art does care to know, are these: that in the heavens God hath set a tabernacle for the sun, “which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.”

This, then, being the kind of truth with which Art is exclusively concerned, how is such truth as this to be ascertained and accumulated? Evidently, and only, by perception and feeling. Neither either

by reasoning or report. Nothing must come between Nature and the artist's sight; nothing between God and the artist's soul. Neither calculation nor hearsay,—be it the most subtle of calculations, or the wisest of sayings,—may be allowed to come between the universe and the witness which Art bears to its visible nature. . . .

The whole function of the artist in the world is to be a seeing and feeling creature; to be an instrument of such tenderness and sensitiveness, that no shadow, no hue, no line, no instantaneous and evanescent expression of the visible things around him, nor any of the emotions which they are capable of conveying to the spirit which has been given him, shall either be left unrecorded, or fade from the book of record. There is no great painter, no great workman in any art, but he sees more with the glance of a moment than he could learn by the labor of a thousand hours.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. III, Chap. II, pp. 40, 41.

WHAT is the purpose of your decoration? . . . We profess that it is to honor the Deity; or, in other words, that it is pleasing to Him that we should delight

our eyes with blue and golden colors, and solemnise our spirits by the sight of large stones laid one on another, and ingeniously carved.

I do not think it can be doubted that it *is* pleasing to Him when we do this; for He has Himself prepared for us, nearly every morning and evening, windows painted with Divine art, in blue and gold and vermilion; windows lighted from within by the lustre of that heaven which we may assume, at least with more certainty than any consecrated ground, to be one of His dwelling-places. Again, in every mountain side, and cliff of rude seashore, He has heaped stones one upon another of greater magnitude than those of Chartres Cathedral, and sculptured them with floral ornament,—surely not less sacred because living?

Must it not then be only because we love our own work better than His, that we respect the lucent glass, but not the lucent clouds; that we weave embroidered robes with ingenious fingers, and make bright the gilded vaults we have beautifully ordained—while yet we have not considered the heavens the work of His fingers: nor the stars of the strange vault

which He has ordained. And do we dream that by carving fonts and lifting pillars in His honor, who cuts the way of the rivers among the rocks, and at whose reproof the pillars of the earth are astonished, we shall obtain pardon for the dishonor done to the hills and streams by which He has appointed our dwelling-place;—for the infection of their sweet air with poison;—for the burning up their tender grass and flowers with fire. . . .

— *Lectures on Art*, Lect. II, p. 237.

THE first thing we have to ask of decoration is that it should indicate strong liking, and that honestly. . . .

The second requirement in decoration, is a sign of our liking the right thing. And the right thing to be liked is God's work, which He made for our delight and contentment in this world. And all noble ornamentation is the expression of man's delight in God's work.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. II, p. 56.

THIS infinite universe is unfathomable, inconceivable, in its whole; every human creature must slowly spell out, and long contemplate, such part of it as may be possible for him to reach; then set forth

what he has learned of it for those beneath him; extricating it from infinity, as one gathers a violet out of grass; one does not improve either violet or grass in gathering it, but one makes the flower visible; and the human being has to make its power upon his own heart visible also, and to give it the honor of the good thoughts it has raised up in him, and to write upon it the history of his own soul. And sometimes he may be able to do more than this, and to set it in strange lights, and display it in a thousand ways before unknown: ways specially directed to necessary and noble purposes, for which he had to choose instruments out of the wide armory of God. All this he may do: and in this he is only doing what every Christian has to do with the written, as well as the created word, "rightly dividing the word of truth."

— *Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. XXX, p. 344.

BEWARE, in going to nature, of taking the commonplace dogmas or dicta of art. Look not for what is like Titian or like Claude—but believe that everything which God has made is beautiful, and that everything which Nature teaches is true.

— *Arrows of the Chace*, Letter I, p. 38.

THERE is but one grand style in the treatment of all subjects, whatsoever, and that style is based on the *perfect* knowledge, and consists in the simple, unencumbered rendering of the specific characters of the given object. Every change, or abandonment of such specific character, is as destructive of grandeur as it is of truth, of beauty, of propriety. Every alteration of the features of nature has its origin either in powerless indolence or blind audacity, in the folly which forgets, or the insolence which desecrates, works which it is the pride of angels to know, and their privilege to love.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Preface to Second Edition, p. 27.

AN architect should live as little in cities as a painter. Send him to our hills, and let him study there what nature understands by a buttress, and what by a dome.

— *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Chap. III, p. 99.

HUMAN Art can only flourish when its dew is Affection: its air, Devotion; the rock of its roots, Patience; and its sunshine, God.

— *The Laws of Fésole*, Chap. X, p. 135.

WE need not hope to be able to imitate, in general work, any of the subtly

combined curvatures of Nature's highest designing; on the contrary, their extreme refinement renders them unfit for coarse service or material. Lines which are lovely in the pearly film of the Nautilus shell, are lost in the gray roughness of stone; and those which are sublime in the blue of far away hills, are weak in the substance of incumbent marble. . . .

. . . No sculptor can in the least imitate the peculiar character of accidental fracture: he can obey or exhibit the laws of Nature, but he cannot copy the felicity of her fancies, nor follow the steps of her fury. The very glory of a mountain is in the revolutions which raised it into power, and the forces which are striking it into ruin. But we want no cold and careful imitation of catastrophe; no calculated mockery of convulsion; no delicate recommendation of ruin. We are to follow the labor of Nature, but not her disturbance; to imitate what she has deliberately ordained, not what she has violently suffered, or strangely permitted. . . . Beautiful ornament, wherever found, or however invented, is always either an intentional or unintentional copy of some constant natural form.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. XX, pp. 224, 225.

FOR prolonged entertainment, no picture can be compared with the wealth of interest which may be found in the herbage of the poorest field, or blossoms of the narrowest copse.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part IX, Chap. I, p. 249.

THE art of man is the expression of his rational and disciplined delight in the forms and laws of the creation of which he forms a part. . . . Fix, then, this in your mind — that your art is to be the praise of something that you love,—be you small or great, what healthy art is possible to you must be the expression of your true delight in a real thing, better than the art.

— *The Laws of Fésole*, Chap. I, pp. 11, 12.

MANY forest trees present, in their accidental contortions, types of the most complicated spiral shafts, the plan being originally of a graceful shaft rising from several roots; nor, indeed, will the reader ever find models for every kind of shaft decoration, so graceful or so gorgeous, as he will find in the great forest aisle, when the strength of the earth itself seems to rise from the roots into the vaulting: but the shaft surface, barred as it expands with wings of

ebony and silver, is fretted with traceries of ivy, marbled with purple moss, veined with gray lichen, and tessellated by the rays of the rolling heaven, with flitting fancies of blue shadow and burning gold.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. XXVI, p. 299.

THE greater part of those delights by which Nature recommends herself to man at all times, cannot be conveyed by his imitative work. He cannot make his grass green and cool and good to rest upon, which in Nature is its chief use to man; nor can he make his flowers tender and full of color and of scent, which in Nature are their chief powers of giving joy. Those qualities which alone he can secure are certain severe characters of form, such as men only see in Nature on deliberate examination, and by the full and set appliance of sight and thought; a man must lie down on the bank of grass on his breast and set himself to watch and penetrate the intertwining of it, before he finds that which is good to be gathered by the architect. So then while Nature is at all times pleasant to us, and while the sight and sense of her work may mingle happily with all our thoughts, and labors, and

times of existence, that image of her which the architect carries away represents what we can only perceive in her by direct intellectual exertion of a similar kind in order to understand it and feel it.

— *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Chap. IV, p. 113.

ALL art, and all Nature, depend on the “disposition of masses.” Painting, sculpture, music and poetry, depend equally on the “proportion,” whether of colors, stones, notes, or words. Proportion is a principle, not of architecture, but of existence. It is by the law of proportion that stars shine, that mountains stand, and rivers flow.

— *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, Lecture I, p. 274.

THE true ideal of landscape is precisely the same as that of the human form; it is the expression of the specific—not the individual, but the specific—characters of every object, in their perfection; there is an ideal form of every herb, flower, and tree: it is that form to which every individual of the species has a tendency to arrive, freed from the influence of accident or disease. Every landscape painter should have the specific characters of every object he has to represent, rock, flower, or

cloud; and in his highest ideal works, all their distinctions will be perfectly expressed, broadly or delicately, slightly or completely, according to the nature of the subject, and the degree of attention which is to be drawn to the particular object by the part it plays in the composition. . . .

. . . Botanical or geological details are not to be given as matters of curiosity or subject of search, but as the ultimate elements of every species of expression and order of loveliness. . . .

. . . Every herb and flower of the field has its specific, distinct, and perfect beauty; it has its peculiar habitation, expression and function. The highest art is that which seizes this specific character, which develops and illustrates it, which assigns to it its proper position in the landscape, and which, by means of it, enhances and enforces the great impression which the picture is intended to convey. Nor is it of herbs and flowers alone that such scientific representation is required. Every class of rock, every kind of earth, every form of cloud, must be studied with equal industry, and rendered with equal precision. . . .

. . . Generalization, as the word is com-

monly understood, is the act of a vulgar, incapable, and unthinking mind. To see in all mountains nothing but similar heaps of earth; in all rocks, nothing but similar concretions of solid matter; in all trees, nothing but similar accumulations of leaves, is no sign of high feeling or extended thought. The more we know, and the more we feel, the more we separate; we separate to obtain a more perfect unity.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Preface, pp. 28-39.

OF all embellishments by which the efforts of man can enhance the beauty of natural scenery, those are the most effective which can give animation to the scene, while the spirit which they bestow is in unison with its general character. It is generally desirable to indicate the presence of animated existence in a scene of natural beauty; but only of such existence as shall be imbued with the spirit, and shall partake of the essence, of the beauty, which, without it, would be dead.

— *The Poetry of Architecture*, p. 9.

It is ordained that, for our encouragement, every step we make in the more exalted range of science adds something

also to its practical applicabilities; that all the great phenomena of nature, the knowledge of which is desired by the angels only, by us partly, as it reveals to farther vision the being and the glory of Him in whom they rejoice and we live, dispense yet such kind influences and so much of material blessing as to be joyfully felt by all inferior creatures, and to be desired by them with such single desire as the imperfection of their nature may admit; that the strong torrents which, in their own gladness fill the hills with hollow thunder and the vales with winding light, have yet their bounden charge of field to feed and barge to bear; that the fierce flames to which the Alp owes its upheaval and the volcano its terror, temper for us the metal vein and quickening spring; and that for our incitement, I say not our reward, for knowledge is its own reward, herbs have their healing, stones their preciousness, and stars their times.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part III, Sect. I, Chap. I, p. 228.

NATURE is never mechanical in her arrangements; she never allows two members of her composition exactly to correspond: accordingly, in every piece of art

which is to combine, without gradations, with landscape (as must always be the case in monuments) we must not allow a multitude of similar members; the design must be a dignified and simple whole.

— *The Poetry of Architecture*, p. 171.

THE word truth, as applied to art, signifies the faithful statement, either to the mind or senses, of any fact of Nature.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Part I, Sect. 1, Chap. V, p. 95.

EVERY geological formation has features entirely peculiar to itself: definite lines of fracture, giving rise to fixed resultant forms of rock and earth; peculiar vegetable products, among which still farther distinctions are wrought out by variations of climate and elevation. From such modifying circumstances, arise the infinite varieties of the orders of landscape, of which each one shows perfect harmony among its several features, and possesses an ideal beauty of its own. . . . The level marshes and rich meadows of the tertiary, the rounded swells and short pastures of the chalk, the square-built cliffs and cloven dells of the lower limestone, the soaring peaks and ridgy precipices of the primaries, having nothing

in common among them — nothing which is not distinctive and incommunicable. Their very atmospheres are different — their clouds are different — their humors of storm and sunshine are different — their flowers, animals and forests are different. By each order of landscape — and its orders, I repeat, are infinite in number, corresponding not only to the several species of rock, but to the particular circumstances of the rock's deposition or after treatment, and to the incalculable varieties of climate, aspect, and human interference: by each order of landscape, I say, peculiar lessons are intended to be taught, and distinct pleasures to be conveyed: and it is as utterly futile to talk of generalizing their impressions into an ideal landscape, as to talk of amalgamating all nourishment into one ideal food, gathering all music into one ideal movement, or confounding all thought into one ideal idea.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Preface to Second Edition, p. 40.

NO PICTURE can be good which deceives by its imitation, for the very reason that nothing can be beautiful which is not true.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Part I, Sect. I, Chap. V, p. 99.

IN the edifices of Man there should be found reverent worship and following, not only of the spirit which rounds the pillars of the forest, and arches the vault of the avenue — which gives veining to the leaf, and polish to the shell, and grace to every pulse that agitates animal organization — but of that also which reproves the pillars of the earth, and builds up her barren precipices into the coldness of the clouds, and lifts her shadowy cones of mountain purple into the pale arch of the sky.

— *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Chap. III, p. 72.

It is always to be remembered that no one mind is like another, either in its powers or perceptions; and while the main principles of training must be the same for all, the result in each will be as various as the kinds of truth which each will apprehend; therefore, also, the modes of effort, even in men whose inner principles and final aims are exactly the same. Suppose, for instance, two men, equally honest, equally industrious, equally impressed with a humble desire to render some part of what they saw in Nature faithfully. . . . But one of them is quiet in temperament, has a feeble memory, no invention, and excessively keen sight.

The other is impatient in temperament, has a memory which nothing escapes, an invention which never rests, and is comparatively near-sighted.

Set them both free in the same field in a mountain valley. One sees everything, small and large, with almost the same clearness; mountains and grasshoppers alike; the leaves on the branches, the veins in the pebbles, the bubbles in the stream; but he can remember nothing, and invent nothing. . . .

Meantime the other has been watching the change of the clouds, and the march of the light along the mountain sides; he beholds the entire scene in broad, soft masses of true gradation, and the very feebleness of his sight is in some sort an advantage to him, in making him more sensible of the aërial mystery of distance, and hiding from him the multitudes of circumstances which it would have been impossible for him to represent. But there is not one change in the casting of the jagged shadows along the hollows of the hills, but it is fixed on his mind forever; not a flake of spray has broken from the sea of cloud about their bases, but he has watched it as it melts away, and could recall it to its lost place in heaven by the slightest effort of his thoughts. . . .

Fancy how his paper will be covered with stray symbols and blots, and undecipherable short-hand:—as for his sitting down to “draw from Nature,” there was not one of the things which he wished to represent that stayed for so much as five seconds together; but none of them escaped, for all that: they are sealed up in that strange store-house of his; he may take one of them out, perhaps this day twenty years, and paint it in his dark room far away. Now, observe, you may tell both of these men, when they are young, that they are to be honest, that they have an important function, and that they are not to care what Raphael did. This you may wholesomely impress on them both. But fancy the exquisite absurdity of expecting either of them to possess any of the qualities of the other.

—*Pre-Raphaelitism*, pp. 252, 254.

To MY own mind, there is no more beautiful proof of benevolent design in the creation of the earth, than the exact adaptation of its materials to the art-power of man. The plasticity and constancy under fire of clay: the ductility and fusibility of gold and iron: the consistent softness of marble, and the fibrous toughness of wood, are in each material carried to the exact degree which

renders them provocative of skill by their resistance, and full of reward for it by their compliance. — *The Art of England*, Lecture V, p. 322.

I WOULD rather teach drawing that my pupils may learn to love Nature, than teach the looking at Nature that they may learn to draw. — *Elements of Drawing*, Preface, p. 226.

OBSERVE that you do not wilfully use the realistic power of art to convince yourselves of historical or theological statements which you cannot otherwise prove, and which you wish to prove:—on the other hand, that you do not check your imagination and conscience while seizing the truths of which they alone are cognizant, because you value too highly the scientific interest which attaches to the investigation of second causes.

For instance, it may be quite possible to show the conditions in water and electricity which necessarily produce the craggy outline, the apparently self-contained silvery light, and the sulphurous blue shadow of a thunder-cloud, and which separate these from the depth of the golden peace in the dawn of a summer morning. . . . But it is the function of the rightly-trained imagina-

tion to recognise, in these, and such other relative aspects, the unity of teaching which impresses, alike on our senses and our conscience, the eternal difference between good and evil: and the rule, over the clouds of heaven and over the creatures in the earth, of the same Spirit which teaches to our own hearts the bitterness of death, and strength of love.

— *Lectures on Art*, Lecture II, p. 225.

THE moral temper of the workman is shown by his lovely forms and thoughts to express, as well as by the force of his hand in expression.

— *Lectures on Art*, Lecture III, p. 245.

As soon as you have obtained the power of drawing, I do not say a mountain, but even a stone accurately, you will find that in the grain, the lustre, and the cleavage-lines of the smallest fragment of rock, there are recorded forces of every order and magnitude, from those which raise a continent by one volcanic effort, to those which at every instant are polishing the apparently complete crystal in its nest, and conducting the apparently motionless metal in its vein, and that only by the art of your own hand, and fidelity of sight which it developes, you can obtain true perception of these invincible and inimitable

arts of the earth herself: while the comparatively slight effort necessary to obtain so much skill as may serviceably draw mountains in distant effect will be instantly rewarded by what is almost equivalent to a new sense of the conditions of their structure.

— *Lectures on Art*, Lecture IV, p. 263.

THE good architects have generally been content, with God's arch, the arch of the rainbow and of the apparent heaven, and which the sun shapes for us as it sets and rises.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. X, p. 134.

OH, if people did but know how many lines nature *suggests* without *showing*, what different art should we have!

— *Arrows of the Chace*, Letter I, p. 37.

EVERY archæologist, every natural philosopher, knows that there is a peculiar rigidity of mind brought on by long devotion to logical and analytical inquiries. . . . The man who has gone, hammer in hand, over the surface of a romantic country, feels no longer, in the mountain ranges he has so laboriously explored, the sublimity or mystery with which they were veiled when he first beheld them, and with which they are

adorned in the mind of the passing traveller. . . . And it would be with infinite gratitude that he would regard the man, who, retaining in his delineation of natural scenery a fidelity to the facts of science so rigid as to make his work at once acceptable and credible to the most sternly critical intellect, should yet invest its features again with the sweet veil of their daily aspect: should make them dazzling with the splendor of wandering light, and involve them in the unsearchableness of stormy obscurity: should restore to the divided anatomy its visible vitality of operation, clothe naked crags with soft forests, enrich the mountain ruins with bright pastures, and lead the thoughts from the monotonous recurrence of the phenomena of the physical world, to the sweet interests and sorrows of human life and death.

— *Pre-Raphaelitism*, pp. 279, 280.

GOOD painting, like nature's own work, is infinite, and unreduceable.

— *The Elements of Perspective*, Problem XX, p. 379.

WE lay it down for a first principle, that our graphic art, whether painting or sculpture, is to produce something which shall look as like Nature as possible. But now

we must go one step farther, and say that it is to produce what shall look like Nature to people who know what Nature is like ! You see this is at once a great restriction, as well as a great exaltation of our aim.

— *Aratra Pentelici*, Lecture IV, p. 358.

THE teaching of Nature is as varied and infinite as it is constant; and the duty of the painter is to watch for every one of her lessons, and to give those in which she has manifested each of her principles in the most peculiar and striking way.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Part II, Sect. I, Chap. IV, p. 147.

I THINK I am justified in considering those forms to be *most* natural which are most frequent; or, rather, that on the shapes which in the every-day world are familiar to the eyes of men, God has stamped those characters of beauty which He has made it man's nature to love. . . . By frequency I mean that limited and isolated frequency, which is characteristic of all perfection; not mere multitude; as a rose is a common flower, but yet there are not so many roses on the tree as there are leaves. In this respect Nature is sparing of her highest, and lavish of her less, beauty; but I call the flower as frequent

as the leaf, because, each in its allotted quantity, where the one is, there will ordinarily be the other.

— *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Lecture IV, pp. 102, 103.

IN all drawing and sculpture, it is the power of rounding, softly and perfectly, every inferior mass which preserves the serenity, as it follows the truth, of Nature, and which demands the highest knowledge and skill from the workman.

— *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Letter III, p. 90.

It is one of the eternal principles of Nature, that she will not have one line nor color, nor one portion, nor atom of space without a change in it. There is not one of her shadows, tints, or lines that is not in a state of perpetual variation: I do not mean in time, but in space. There is not a leaf in the world which has the *same color* visible over its whole surface; it has a white highlight somewhere; and in proportion as it curves to or from that focus, the color is brighter or grayer. Pick up a common flint from the roadside, and count, if you can, its changes and hues of color. Every bit of bare ground under your feet has in it a thousand such — the gray pebbles, the warm

ochre, the green of incipient vegetation, the grays and blacks of its reflexes and shadows, might keep a painter at work for a month, if he were obliged to follow them touch for touch: how much more, when the same infinity of change is carried out with vastness of object and space.

—*Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Part II, Sect. II, Chap. II, pp. 271, 272.

CONSIDER what marble seems to have been made for. Over the greater part of the surface of the world, we find that a rock has been providentially distributed, in a manner particularly pointing it out as intended for the service of man. Not altogether a common rock, it is yet rare enough to command a certain degree of interest and attention wherever it is found; but not so rare as to preclude its use for any purpose to which it is fitted. It is exactly of the consistence which is best adapted for sculpture: that is to say, neither hard nor brittle, nor flaky nor splintery, but uniform, and delicately, yet not ignobly, soft,—exactly soft enough to allow the sculptor to work it without force, and trace on it the finest lines of finished form; and yet so hard as never to betray the touch or moulder away beneath the steel; and so admirably crystallized, and

of such permanent elements, that no rains dissolve it, no time changes it, no atmosphere decomposes it: once shaped, it is shaped forever, unless subjected to actual violence or attrition. This rock, then, is prepared by Nature for the sculptor and architect, just as paper is prepared by the manufacturer for the artist, with as great — nay, with greater — care, and more perfect adaptation of the material to the requirements. And of this marble paper, some is white and some colored; but more is colored than white, because the white is evidently meant for sculpture, and the colored for the covering of large surfaces.

Now, if we would take Nature at her word, and use this precious paper which she has taken so much care to provide for us (it is a long process, the making of that paper; the pulp of it needing the subtlest possible solution, and the pressing of it — for it is all hot-pressed — having to be done under the saw, or under something at least as heavy); if, I say, we use it as Nature would have us, consider what advantages would follow. The colors of marble are mingled for us just as if on a prepared palette. They are of all shades and hues (except bad ones), some being united and even, some broken, mixed,

and interrupted, in order to supply, as far as possible, the want of the painter's power of breaking and mingling the color with the brush. But there is more in the colors than this delicacy of adaptation. There is history in them. By the manner in which they are arranged in every piece of marble, they record the means by which that marble has been produced, and the successive changes through which it has passed. And in all their veins and zones, and flame-like stainings, or broken and disconnected lines, they write various legends, never untrue, of the former political state of the mountain kingdom to which they belonged, of its infirmities and fortitudes, convulsions and consolidations, from the beginning of time.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. III, Chap. I, pp. 30, 31, 32.

FROM young artists in landscape, nothing ought to be tolerated but simple *bona fide imitations* of Nature. Their duty is neither to choose, nor compose, nor imagine, nor experimentalize: but to be humble and earnest in following the steps of Nature, and tracing the finger of God.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part II, Sect. VI, Chap. III, p. 209.

SKY AND CLOUD.

I HOPE to show, . . . what noble things these clouds are, and with what feeling it seems to be intended by their Creator that we should contemplate them. — *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. VI, p. 113.

III.

SKY AND CLOUD.

I UNDERSTAND the making the firmament to signify that, so far as man is concerned, most magnificent ordinance of the clouds :— the ordinance, that as the great plain of waters was formed on the face of the earth, so also a plain of waters should be stretched along the height of air, and the face of the cloud answer the face of the ocean ; and that this upper and heavenly plain should be of waters, as it were, glorified in their nature, no longer quenching the fire, but now bearing fire in their own bosoms ; no longer murmuring only when the winds raise them or rocks divide, but answering each other with their own voices from pole to pole ; no longer restrained by established shores, and guided through unchanging channels, but going forth at their pleasure like the armies of the angels, and choosing their encampments upon the heights of the hills ; no longer hurried downwards forever, moving but to fall, nor lost in lightless accumulation of the abyss, but covering the east and west with the waving of their wings,

and robing the gloom of the farther infinite with a vesture of divers colors, of which the threads are purple and scarlet, and the embroideries flame.

This I believe, is the ordinance of the firmament; and it seems to me that in the midst of the material nearness of these heavens God means us to acknowledge His own immediate presence as visiting, judging, and blessing us. . . . "He doth set His bow in the cloud," and thus renews, in the sound of every drooping swathe of rain, His promise of everlasting love. "In them hath He set a *tabernacle* for the sun"; whose burning ball, which without the firmament would be seen as an intolerable and scorching circle in the blackness of vacuity, is by that firmament surrounded with gorgeous service, and tempered by mediatorial ministries: by the firmament of clouds the golden pavement is spread for His chariot wheels at morning; by the firmament of clouds the temple is built for His presence to fill with light at noon; by the firmament of clouds the purple veil is closed at evening round the sanctuary of His rest; by the mists of the firmament His implacable light is divided, and its separated fierceness appeased into the soft blue that fills the depth of distance

with its bloom, and the flush with which the mountains burn as they drink the overflowing of the dayspring. And in this tabernacling of the unendurable sun with men, through the shadows of the firmament, God would seem to set forth the stooping of His own majesty to men, upon the *throne* of the firmament. . . . And all those passings to and fro of fruitful shower and grateful shade, and all those visions of silver palaces built about the horizon, and voices of moaning winds and threatening thunders, and glories of colored robe and cloven ray, are but to deepen in our hearts the acceptance and distinctness, and dearness of the simple words, "Our Father, which art in heaven."

— *Cæli Enarrant*, Chap. I, pp. 159, 160.

— Also *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. VI.

THE heavens declare — or make clear — the honour of God. . . . These heavens, are the real roof, as the earth is the real floor, of God's house for you here. . . . That word "coeli," in the first words of the Latin psalm, means the "hollow place." It is the great space, or, as we conceive it, vault, of Heaven. It shows the glory of God in the existence of the light by which we live.

— *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. III, Letter LXXV, p. 402.

It is a strange thing how little in general people know about the sky. It is the part of creation in which Nature has done more for the sake of pleasing man, more for the sole and evident purpose of talking to him and teaching him, than in any other of her works, and it is just the part in which we least attend to her. There are not many of her other works in which some more material or essential purpose than the mere pleasing of man is not answered by every part of their organization; but every essential purpose of the sky might, so far as we know, be answered, if once in three days, or thereabouts, a great ugly black rain-cloud were brought up over the blue, and everything well watered, and so all left blue again till next time, with perhaps a film of morning and evening mist for dew. And instead of this, there is not a moment of any day of our lives, when Nature is not producing scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory, and working still upon such exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty, that it is quite certain it is all done for us, and intended for our perpetual pleasure. And every man, wherever placed, however far from other sources of interest or of beauty, has this done for him constantly. . . . The sky is for all; bright as

it is, it is not "too bright, nor good, for human nature's daily food"; it is fitted in all its functions for the perpetual comfort and exalting of the heart, for the soothing it and purifying it from its dross and dust. Sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious, sometimes awful, never the same for two moments together: almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in its tenderness, almost divine in its infinity, its appeal to what is immortal in us, is as distinct, as its ministry of chastisement or of blessing to what is mortal is essential. And yet we never attend to it, we never make it a subject of thought, but as it has to do with our animal sensations: . . .

If in our moments of utter idleness and insipidity, we turn to the sky as a last resource, which of its phenomena do we speak of? One says it has been wet, and another it has been windy, and another it has been warm. Who, among the whole chattering crowd, can tell me of the forms and the precipices of the chain of tall white mountains that girded the horizon at noon yesterday? Who saw the narrow sunbeam that came out of the south, and smote upon their summits until they melted and mouldered away in a dust of blue rain? Who saw the dance of the dead clouds when the sunlight left them last

night, and the west wind blew them before it like withered leaves? All has passed, unregretted as unseen; or if the apathy be ever shaken off, even for an instant, it is only by what is gross, or what is extraordinary; and yet it is not in the broad and fierce manifestations of the elemental energies, not in the clash of the hail, nor the drift of the whirlwind, that the highest characters of the sublime are developed. God is not in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice. They are but the blunt and the low faculties of our nature, which can only be addressed through lampblack and lightning. It is in quiet and subdued passages of unobtrusive majesty, the deep, and the calm, and the perpetual,—that which must be sought ere it is seen, and loved ere it is understood,—things which the angels work out for us daily, and yet vary eternally, which are never wanting, and never repeated, which are to be found always yet each found but once; it is through these that the lesson of devotion is chiefly taught, and the blessing of beauty given. . . .

I fully believe, little as people in general are concerned with art, more of their ideas of sky are derived from pictures than from reality, and that if we could examine the con-

ception formed in the minds of most educated persons when we talk of clouds, it would frequently be found composed of fragments of blue and white reminiscences of the old masters. . . .

. . . Now, if there be one characteristic of the sky more valuable or necessary to be rendered than another, it is that which Wordsworth has given in the second book of the *Excursion*:—

The chasm of sky above my head
Is Heaven's profoundest azure. No domain
For fickle, short-lived clouds, to occupy,
Or to pass through; — but rather an *abyss*
In which the everlasting stars abide, [tempt
And whose soft gloom, and boundless depth, might
The curious eye to look for them by day.

And, in his *American Notes*, I remember Dickens notices the same truth, describing himself as lying drowsily on the barge deck, looking not at, but *through* the sky. And if you look intensely at the pure blue of a serene sky, you will see that there is a variety and fulness in its very repose. It is not flat dead color, but a deep, quivering, transparent body of penetrable air, in which you trace or imagine short, falling spots of deceiving light, and dim shades, faint, veiled vestiges of dark vapor.

—*Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Part II, Sect. III, Chap. I, pp. 314-318.

BETWEEN the heaven and man came the cloud.

Has the reader any distinct idea of what clouds are?

That mist which lies in the morning so softly in the valley, level and white, through which the tops of the trees rise as if through an inundation—why is *it* so heavy? And why does it lie so low, being yet so thin and frail that it will melt away utterly into splendor of morning, when the sun has shone on it but a few moments more? Those colossal pyramids, huge and firm, with outlines as of rocks, and strength to bear the beating of the high sun full on their fiery flanks—why are *they* so light—their bases high over our heads, high over the heads of Alps? Why will these melt away, not as the sun *rises*, but as he *descends*, and leave the stars of twilight clear, while the valley vapor gains again upon the earth like a shroud? Or that ghost of a cloud, which steals by yonder clump of pines; nay, which does *not* steal by them, but haunts them, wreathing yet round them, and yet—and yet, slowly; now falling in a fair waved line like a woman's veil; now fading, now gone; we look away for an instant, and look back, and it is there again. What has it to do with that clump

of pines, that it broods by them and waves itself among their branches, to and fro? Has it hidden a cloudy treasure among the moss at their roots, which it watches thus? Or has some strong enchanter charmed it into fond returning, or bound it fast within those bars of bough? And yonder filmy crescent, bent like an archer's bow above the snowy summit, the highest of all the hill—that white arch which never forms but over the supreme crest—how is it stayed there, repelled apparently from the snow—nowhere touching it, the clear sky seen between it and the mountain edge, yet never leaving it—poised as a white bird hovers over its nest?

Or those war-clouds that gather on the horizon, dragon-crested, tongued with fire; how is their barbed strength bridled? What bits are these they are champing with their vaporous lips; flinging off flakes of black foam? Leagued leviathans of the Sea of Heaven, out of their nostrils goeth smoke, and their eyes are like the eyelids of the morning: the sword of him that layeth at them cannot hold the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon. Where ride the captains of their armies? Where are set the measures of their march? Fierce murmurers, answer-

ing each other from morning until evening—what rebuke is this which has awed them into peace?—what hand has reined them back by the way by which they came?

I know not if the reader will think at first that questions like these are easily answered. So far from it, I rather believe that some of the mysteries of the clouds never will be understood by us at all. “Knowest thou the balancing of the clouds?” Is the answer ever to be one of pride? “The wondrous works of Him which is *perfect* in knowledge?” Is *our* knowledge ever to be so?

It is one of the most discouraging consequences of the varied character of this work of mine, that I am wholly unable to take note of the advance of modern science. What has conclusively been discovered or observed about clouds I know not; but by the chance inquiry possible to me I find no book which fairly states the difficulties of accounting for even the ordinary aspects of the sky. I shall, therefore, be able to do little more than suggest inquiries to the reader, putting the subject in a clear form for him. All men accustomed to investigation will confirm me in saying that it is a great step when we are personally quite certain what we do *not* know. First, then, I

believe we do not know what makes clouds float. Clouds are water, in some form or another; but water is heavier than air, and the finest form you can give a heavy thing will not make it float in a light thing. *On* it, yes, as a boat; but *in* it, no. Clouds are not boats, nor boatshaped, and they float in the air, not on the top of it. "Nay, but though unlike boats, may they not be like feathers? If out of quill substance there may be constructed eider-down, and out of vegetable tissue, thistle-down, both buoyant enough for a time, surely of water-tissue may be constructed also water-down, which will be buoyant enough for all cloudy purposes." Not so. Throw out your eider plumage in a calm day, and it will all come settling to the ground—slowly indeed, to aspect; but practically so fast that all our finest clouds would be here in a heap about our ears in an hour or two, if they were only made of water feathers. "But may they not be quill feathers, and have air inside them? May not all their particles be minute little balloons?" A balloon only floats when the air inside it is either specifically, or by heating, lighter than the air it floats in. If the cloud-feathers had warm air inside their quills, a cloud

would be warmer than the air about it, which it is not (I believe). And if the cloud-feathers had hydrogen inside their quills, a cloud would be unwholesome for breathing, which it is not—at least so it seems to me.

“But may they not have nothing inside their quills?” Then they would rise, as bubbles do through water, just as certainly as, if they were solid feathers, they would fall. All our clouds would go up to the top of the air, and swim in eddies of cloud-foam.

“But is not that just what they do?” No. They float at different heights, and with definite forms, in the body of the air itself. If they rose like foam, the sky on a cloudy day would look like a very large flat glass of champagne seen from below, with a stream of bubbles (or clouds) going up as fast as they could to a flat foam-ceiling.

“But may they not be just so nicely mixed out of something and nothing, as to float where they are wanted?” Yes: that is just what they not only may, but must be: only this way of mixing something and nothing is the very thing I want to explain or have explained, and cannot do it, nor get it done.

Except thus far. It is conceivable that minute hollow spherical globules might be

formed of water, in which the enclosed vacuity just balanced the weight of the enclosing water, and that the arched sphere formed by the watery film was strong enough to prevent the pressure of the atmosphere from breaking it in. Such a globule would float like a balloon at the height in the atmosphere where the equipoise between the vacuum it enclosed, and its own excess of weight above that of the air, was exact. It would, probably, approach its companion globules by reciprocal attraction, and form aggregations which might be visible.

This is, I believe, the view usually taken by meteorologists.

Nevertheless, I state it as a possibility only, not seeing how any known operation of physical law could explain the formation of such molecules. This, however, is not the only difficulty. Whatever shape the water is thrown into, it seems at first improbable that it should lose its property of wetness. Minute division of rain, as in "Scotch mist," makes it capable of floating farther, or floating up and down a little, just as dust will float, though pebbles will not; or gold-leaf, though a sovereign will not; but minutely divided rain wets as much as any other kind, whereas a cloud, partially always, sometimes entirely, loses its power

of moistening. Some low clouds look, when you are in them, as if they were made of specks of dust, like short hair; and these clouds are entirely dry. And also many clouds will wet some substances, but not others. So that we must grant further, if we are to be happy in our theory, that the spherical molecules are held together by an attraction which prevents their adhering to any foreign body, or perhaps ceases only under some peculiar electric conditions.

The question remains, even supposing their production accounted for—What intermediate states of water may exist between these spherical hollow molecules and pure vapor?

Has the reader ever considered the relations of commonest forms of volatile substance? The invisible particles which cause the scent of a rose-leaf, how minute, how multitudinous, passing richly away into the air continually! The visible cloud of frankincense—why visible? Is it in consequence of the greater quantity, or larger size, of the particles, and how does the heat act in throwing them off in this quantity, or of this size?

Ask the same questions respecting water. It dries, that is, becomes volatile, invisibly, at (any?) temperature. Snow dries, as water does. Under increase of heat, it volatilizes

faster, so as to become dimly visible in large mass, as a heat-haze. It reaches boiling-point, then becomes entirely visible. But compress it, so that no air shall get between the watery particles—it is invisible again. At the first issuing from the steam-pipe the steam is transparent; but opaque, or visible, as it diffuses itself. The water is indeed closer, because cooler, in that diffusion: but more air is between its particles. Then this very question of visibility is an endless one, wavering between form of substance and action of light. The clearest (or least visible) stream becomes brightly opaque by more minute division in its foam, and the clearest dew in hoar-frost. Dust, unperceived in shade, becomes constantly visible in sunbeam; and watery vapor in the atmosphere, which is itself opaque, when there is promise of fine weather, becomes exquisitely transparent; and (questionably) blue, when it is going to rain.

Questionably blue; for beside knowing very little about water, we know what, except by courtesy, must, I think, be called Nothing—about air. Is it the watery vapor, or the air itself, which is blue? Are neither blue, but only white, producing blue when seen over dark spaces? If either blue, or white, why, when crimson is their commanded dress, are

the most distant clouds crimsonest? Clouds close to us, may be blue, but far off, golden—a strange result, if the air is blue. And again, if blue, why are rays that come through large spaces of it red: and that Alp, or anything else that catches far-away light, why colored red at dawn and sunset? No one knows, I believe. It is true that many substances, as opal, are blue, or green, by reflected light, yellow by transmitted; but air, if blue at all, is blue always by transmitted light. . . .

But further: these questions of volatility, and visibility, and hue, are all complicated with those of shape. How is a cloud outlined? Granted whatever you choose to ask concerning its material, or its aspect, its loftiness, and luminousness—how of its limitation? What hews it into a heap, or spins it into a web? Cold is usually shapeless, I suppose, extending over large spaces equally, or with gradual diminution. You cannot have, in the open air, angles, and wedges, and coils, and cliffs of cold. Yet the vapor stops suddenly, sharp and steep as a rock, or thrusts itself across the gates of heaven in likeness of a brazen bar; or braids itself in and out, and across and across, like a tissue of tapestry; or falls into ripples, like sand; or into waving shreds and tongues, as fire. On what

anvils and wheels is the vapor pointed, twisted, hammered, whirled, as the potter's clay? By what hands is the incense of the sea built up into domes of marble?

And lastly, all these questions respecting substance, and aspect and shape, and line, and division, are involved with others as inscrutable, concerning action. The curves in which clouds move are unknown — nay, the very method of their motion, or apparent motion, how far it is by change of place, how far by appearance in one place and vanishing from another. And these questions about movement lead partly far away into high mathematics, where I cannot follow them, and partly into theories concerning electricity and infinite space, where I suppose at present no one can follow them.

What, then, is the use of asking the questions?

For my own part, I enjoy the mystery, and perhaps the reader may. I think he ought. He should not be less grateful for summer rain, or see less beauty in the clouds of morning, because they come to prove him with hard questions: to which, perhaps, if we look close at the heavenly scroll, we may find also a syllable or two of answer illuminated here and there. — *Cæli Enarrant*, Chap. II, pp. 161-168.

— Also *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VII, Chap. I.

AT whatever height they form, clouds may be broadly considered as of two species only, massive and striated.

The upper clouds, owing to their quietness and multitude, we may, perhaps, conveniently think of as the "cloud-flocks." . . . Flocks of Admetus under Apollo's keeping. Who else could shepherd such? He by day, dog Sirius by night: or huntress Diana herself—her bright arrows driving away the clouds of prey that would ravage her fair flocks.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VII, Chap. II, pp. 149, 151.

BETWEEN the flocks of small countless clouds which occupy the highest heavens, and the gray undivided film of the true rain-cloud, form the fixed masses or torn fleeces, sometimes collected, and calm, sometimes fiercely drifting, which are, nevertheless, known under one general name of cumulus, or heaped cloud.

The true cumulus, the most majestic of all clouds, and almost the only one which attracts the notice of ordinary observers, is for the most part windless: the movement of its masses being solemn, continuous, inexplicable, a steady advance or retiring, as if they were animated by an

inner will, or compelled by an unseen power. They appear to be peculiarly connected with heat, forming perfectly only in the afternoon, and melting away in the evening. Their noblest conditions are strongly electric, and connect themselves with storm-cloud and true thunder-cloud.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VII, Chap. III, p. 165.

STAND upon the peak of some isolated mountain at daybreak, when the night mists first rise from off the plains, and watch their white and lake-like fields as they float in level bays and winding gulfs about the islanded summits of the lower hills, untouched yet by more than dawn, colder and more quiet than a windless sea under the moon of midnight; watch when the first sunbeam is sent upon the silver channels, how the foam of their undulating surface parts and passes away: and down under their depths, the glittering city and green pasture lie like Atlantis, between the white paths of winding rivers: the flakes of light falling every moment faster and broader among the starry spires, as the wreathed surges break and vanish above them, and the confused crests and ridges of the dark hills shorten their gray shadows upon the

plain. Wait a little longer, and you shall see those scattered mists rallying in the ravines, and floating up toward you, along the winding valleys, till they couch in quiet masses, iridescent with the morning light, upon the broad breasts of the higher hills, whose leagues of massy undulation will melt back into that robe of material light, until they fade away, lost in its lustre, to appear again above, in the serene heaven, like a wild, bright, impossible dream, foundationless and inaccessible, their very bases vanishing in the unsubstantial and mocking blue of the deep lake below. Wait yet a little longer, and you shall see those mists gather themselves into white towers, and stand like fortresses along the promontories, massy and motionless, only piled with every instant higher and higher into the sky, and casting longer shadows athwart the rocks; and out of the pale blue of the horizon you will see forming and advancing a troop of narrow, dark, pointed vapors, which will cover the sky, inch by inch, with their gray network, and take the light off the landscape with an eclipse which will stop the singing of the birds and motion of the leaves together: and then you will see horizontal bars of black shadow forming under them, and lurid

wreaths create themselves, you know not how, along the shoulders of the hills; you never see them form, but when you look back to a place which was clear an instant ago, there is a cloud on it, hanging by the precipices, as a hawk pauses over his prey. And then you will hear the sudden rush of the awakened wind, and you will see those watch-towers of vapor swept away from their foundations, and waving curtains of opaque rain let down to the valleys, swinging from the burdened clouds in black, bending fringes, or pacing in pale columns along the lake level, grazing its surface into foam as they go. And then, as the sun sinks you shall see the storm drift for an instant from off the hills, leaving their broad sides smoking, and loaded yet with snow-white torn, steamlike rags of capricious vapor, now gone, now gathered again; while the smouldering sun, seeming not far away, but burning like a red-hot ball beside you, and as if you could reach it, plunges through the rushing wind and rolling cloud with headlong fall, as if it meant to rise no more, dyeing all the air about with blood. And then you shall hear the fainting tempest die in the hollow of the night, and you shall see a green halo kindling on the summit of the eastern hills,

brighter—brighter yet, till the large white circle of the slow moon is lifted up among the barred clouds, step by step, line by line; star after star she quenches with her kindling light, setting in their stead an army of pale, penetrable, fleecy wreaths in the heaven, to give light upon the earth, which move together, hand in hand, company by company, troop by troop, so measured in their unity of motion, that the whole heaven seems to roll with them, and the earth to reel under them. And then wait yet for one hour, until the east again becomes purple, and the heaving mountains, rolling against it in darkness, like the waves of a wild sea, are drowned one by one in the glory of its burning; watch the white glaciers blaze in their winding paths about the mountains, like mighty serpents with scales of fire; watch the columnar peaks of solitary snow, kindling downwards, chasm by chasm, each in itself a new morning: their long avalanches cast down in keen streams brighter than the lightning, sending his tribute of driven snow, like altar-smoke, up to the heaven: the rose-light of their silent domes flushing that heaven about them and above them, piercing with purer light through its purple lines of lifted cloud, casting a new

glory on every wreath as it passes by, until the whole heaven—one scarlet canopy,—is interwoven with a roof of waving flame, and tossing, vault, beyond vault, as with the drifted wings of many companies of angels.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Part II, Sect. III, Chap. IV, pp. 385-388.

DID you ever see one sunrise like another? does not God vary His clouds for you every morning and every night? though, indeed, there is enough in the disappearing and appearing of the great orb above the rolling of the world, to interest all of us, one would think, for as many times as we shall see it; and yet the aspect is changed for us daily.

— *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, Lecture I, p. 220.

CONCERNING stars in the east—you can't see the loveliest which appear there naturally,—the Morning Star, namely, and his fellows,—unless you get up in the morning.

If you resolve thus always, so far as may be in your own power, to see the loveliest which are there naturally you will soon come to see them in a supernatural manner, with a quite—properly so-called—“miraculous” or “wonderful” light which will be a light in your spirit, not in your eyes. And you will

hear, with your spirit, the Morning Star and his fellows sing together; also, you will hear the sons of God shouting together for joy with them; particularly the little ones,—sparrows, greenfinches, linnets, and the like.

You will by persevering in the practice, gradually discover that it is a pleasant thing to see stars in the luminous east; to watch them fade as they rise: to hear their Master say, “Let there be light,—and there is light”: to see the world made that day at the Word: — *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. III, Letter LX, p. 79.

LAST night the sky was all a spangle and delicate glitter of stars, the glare of them and spikiness softened off by a young darling of a Moon. — *Hortus Inclusus*, p. 51.

VERY wet all morning: the clouds drifting like smoke from the hills, and hanging in wreaths about the white churches on their woody slopes. Kept in till three, then the clouds broke. . . . The clouds were rising gradually from the Apennines, fragments entangled here and there in the ravines catching the level sunlight like so many tongues of fire: the dark blue outline of the hills clear as crystal against a pale distant purity of green sky, the sun touching here

and there upon their turfy precipices. . . . A mass of higher mountains, plunging down into broad valleys dark with olive, their summits at first gray with rain, then deep blue with flying showers—the sun suddenly catching the near woods at their base, already colored exquisitely by the autumn, with such a burst of robing,—penetrating, glow as Turner only could even imagine, set off by the gray storm behind.

To the south, an expanse of sea, varied by reflection of white Alpine cloud, and delicate lines of most pure blue, the low sun sending its line of light—forty miles long—from the horizon; . . . This continued till near sunset, when a tall double rainbow rose to the east over the fiery woods, and as the sun sank, the storm of falling rain on the mountains became suddenly purple—nearly crimson; the rainbow, its hues scarcely traceable, one broad belt of crimson, the clouds above all fire. —*Præterita*, Vol. II, Chap. III, pp. 227, 228.

THE first and most important character of clouds, is dependent on the different altitudes at which they are formed. The atmosphere may be conveniently considered as divided into three spaces, each inhabited by clouds of specific character altogether

different, though, in reality, there is no distinct limit fixed between them by Nature, clouds being formed at *every* altitude, and partaking according to their altitude, more or less of the characters of the upper or lower regions. The scenery of the sky is thus formed of an infinitely graduated series of systematic forms of cloud, each of which has its own region in which alone it is formed, and each of which has specific characters which can only be properly determined by comparing them as they are found clearly distinguished by intervals of considerable space. I shall therefore consider the sky as divided into three regions — the upper region, or region of the cirrus: the central region, or region of the stratus: the lower region, or the region of the rain-cloud.

The clouds which I wish to consider in the upper region, never touch even the highest mountains of Europe . . . they are the motionless multitudinous lines of delicate vapor with which the blue of the open sky is commonly streaked or speckled after several days of fine weather. . . . Their chief characters are — first, Symmetry: They are nearly always arranged in some definite and evident order, commonly in long ranks

reaching sometimes from the zenith to the horizon, each rank composed of an infinite number of transverse bars of about the same length, each bar thickest in the middle, and terminating in a traceless vaporous point at each side; the ranks are in the direction of the wind, and the bars of course at right angles to it; these latter are commonly slightly bent in the middle. . . . Another frequent arrangement is in groups of excessively fine, silky, parallel fibres commonly radiating, or having a tendency to radiate, from one of their extremities and terminating in a plummy sweep at the other:—these are vulgarly known as “mares’ tails.” . . . They differ from all other clouds in having a plan and system; whereas other clouds, though there are certain laws which they cannot break, have yet perfect freedom from anything like a relative and general system of government. The upper clouds are to the lower, what soldiers on parade are to a mixed multitude.

Secondly, Sharpness of Edge:—The edges of the bars of the upper clouds, which are turned to the wind, are often the sharpest which the sky shows; . . . The outline of a black thunder-cloud is striking, from the great energy of the color or shade of the

general mass; but as a line, it is soft and indistinct, compared with the edge of the cirrus, in a clear sky with a brisk breeze. . . .

Thirdly, Multitude:—The delicacy of these vapors is sometimes carried into such an infinity of division, that no other sensation of number that the earth or heaven can give is so impressive. . . .

Fourthly, Purity of Color . . . their colors are more pure and vivid, and their white less sullied than those of any other clouds.

Lastly, Variety:—Variety is never so conspicuous as when it is united with symmetry. The perpetual change of form in other clouds, is monotonous in its very dissimilarity, nor is difference striking where no connection is implied; but if through a range of barred clouds, crossing half the heaven, all governed by the same forces, and falling into one general form, there be yet a marked and evident dissimilarity between each member of the great mass—one more finely drawn, the next more delicately moulded, the next more gracefully bent,—each broken into differently modelled and variously numbered groups, the variety is doubly striking, because contrasted with the perfect symmetry of which it forms a part. . . . Such are the great attributes of the upper cloud region. . . .

The colors of these clouds are so marvelous in their changefulness, that they require particular notice. If you watch for the next sunset, when there are a considerable number of these cirri in the sky, you will see, especially at the zenith, that the sky does not remain of the same color for two inches together; one cloud has a dark side of cold blue, and a fringe of milky white; another, above it, has a dark side of purple and an edge of red; another, nearer the sun, has an under-side of orange and an edge of gold; these you will find mingled with, and passing into the blue of the sky, which in places you will not be able to distinguish from the cool gray of the darker clouds, and which will be itself full of gradation, now pure and deep, now faint and feeble; and all this is done, not in large pieces, nor on a large scale, but over and over again in every square yard, so that there is no single part nor portion of the whole sky which has not in itself variety of color enough for a separate picture, and yet no single part which is like another, or which has not some peculiar source of beauty, and some peculiar arrangement of color of its own.

—*Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Part II, Sect. III, Chap. II, pp. 329-338.

AN entirely glorious sunset . . . deep scarlet and purest rose, on purple gray, in bars; and stationary, plummy, sweeping filaments above in upper-sky—remaining in glory, every moment best, changing from one good into another (but only in color or light—*form steady*), for half an hour full, and the clouds afterwards fading into the gray against amber twilight, *stationary in the same form for about two hours, at least*. The darkening rose-tint remained till half-past ten; the grand time being at nine. The day had been fine, exquisite green light on afternoon hills.

—*The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*, Lecture I, p. 388.

OUR boat shoots swiftly from beneath the last bridge of Venice, and brings us out into the open sea and sky. The pure cumuli of cloud lie crowded and leaning against one another, rank beyond rank, far over the shining water, each cut away at its foundation by a level line, trenchant and clear, till they sink to the horizon like a flight of marble steps, except where the mountains meet them, and are lost in them, barred across by the grey terraces of those cloud foundations, and reduced into one crestless bank of blue, spotted here

and there with strange flakes of wan, aërial, greenish light, strewed upon them like snow.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. II, Chap. III, p. 33.

ARE not all natural things, it may be asked, as lovely near as far away? Nay, not so. Look at the clouds, and watch the delicate sculpture of their alabaster sides, and the rounded lustre of their magnificent rolling. They are meant to be beheld far away; they were shaped for their place, high above your head; approach them, and they fuse into vague mists, or whirl away in fierce fragments of thunderous vapor. — *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. XXI, p. 244.

NEVER if you can help it, miss seeing the sunset and the dawn.

— *The Laws of Fésolé*, Chap. I, p. 20.

THE cloud, or firmament, as we have seen, signifies the ministration of the heavens to man. That ministration may be in judgment or mercy—in the lightning, or the dew. But the bow, or color, of the cloud, signifies always mercy, the sparing of life: such ministry of the heaven, as shall feed and prolong life.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part IX, Chap. XI, p. 404.

THE day had been fine, with scattered clouds; in the evening a most curious case of floating cap clouds *hooding* the Mont Blanc summit without touching it, like gossamer blown upward from a field; an awning of slender threads waving like weeds in the blue sky (as weeds in a brook current I meant), and drawn out like floss silk as fine as snow.

— *Præterita*, Vol. II, Chap. XI, p. 370.

OF one thing I am well assured, that so far as the clouds are regarded, not as concealing the truth of other things, but as themselves true and separate creations, they are not usually beheld by us with enough honor; we have too great veneration for cloudlessness. — *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. V, p. 111.

NOTE that there is this great peculiarity about sky subject, as distinguished from earth subject:—that the clouds, not being much liable to man's interference are always beautifully arranged . . . the clouds, though we can hide them with smoke, and mix them with poison, cannot be quarried nor built over, and they are always therefore gloriously arranged, so gloriously, that unless you have notable powers of memory you need not hope to approach the effect of any sky that

interests you. For both its grace and its glow depend upon the united influence of every cloud within its compass; they all move and burn together in a marvellous harmony; not a cloud of them is out of its appointed place, or fails of its part in the choir; . . . Clouds are definite and very beautiful forms of sculptured mist: sculptured is a perfectly accurate word: they are not more *drifted* into form than they are *carved* into form, the warm air around them cutting them into shape by absorbing the visible vapor beyond certain limits, hence their angular and fantastic outlines, as different from a swollen, spherical, or globular formation, on the one hand, as from that of flat films or shapeless mists on the other.

— *The Elements of Drawing*, Letter II, pp. 327, 329.

IN fine weather the sky was either blue or clear in its light; the clouds either white or golden, adding to, not abating, the lustre of the sky. In wet weather, there were two different species of clouds,—those of beneficent rain, which for distinction's sake I will call the non-electric rain-cloud, and those of storm, usually charged highly with electricity. The beneficent rain-cloud was indeed often extremely dull and gray for days together,

but gracious nevertheless, felt to be doing good, and often to be delightful after drought; capable also of the most exquisite coloring, under certain conditions; and continually traversed in clearing by the rainbow:—and, secondly, the storm-cloud, always majestic, often dazzlingly beautiful, and felt also to be beneficent in its own way, affecting the mass of the air with vital agitation, and purging it from the impurity of all mobific elements.

In the entire system of the firmament, thus seen and understood, there appeared . . . the incontrovertible and unmistakable evidence of a Divine Power in creation, which had fitted, as the air for human breath, so the clouds for human sight and nourishment:—the Father who was in heaven feeding day by day the souls of His children with marvels, and satisfying them with bread, and so filling their hearts with food and gladness.

— *The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*, Lecture I, p. 366.

THE discovery by modern science that all mortal strength is from the Sun while it has thrown foolish persons into atheism, is, to wise ones, the most precious testimony to their faith yet given by physical Nature; for it gives us the arithmetical and measurable assurance that men vitally active are living

sunshine, having the roots of their souls set in sunlight, as the roots of a tree are in the earth; not that the dust is therefore the God of the tree, but the Tree is the animation of the dust, and the living soul of the sunshine.

— *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. III, Letter LXIII, p. 148.

You cannot love the real Sun, that is to say physical light and color, rightly, unless you love the spiritual Sun, that is to say justice and truth, rightly.

— *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. III, Letter LXVI, p. 215.

ALL lovely clouds, remember, are *quiet* clouds,—not merely quiet in appearance because of their greater height and distance, but quiet actually, fixed for hours, it may be, in the same form and place. I have seen a fair-weather cloud high over Coniston Old Man,—not *on* the hill, observe, but a vertical mile above it,—stand motionless,—changeless,—for twelve hours together. From four o'clock in the afternoon of one day I watched it through the night by the north twilight, till the dawn struck it with full crimson, at four of the following July morning.

What is glorious and good in the heavenly cloud, you can, if you will, bring also into your lives,—which are indeed like it, in

their vanishing, but how much more in their *not* vanishing, till the morning take them to itself. As this ghastly phantasy of death is to the mighty clouds of which it is written, "The Chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels," are the fates to which your passions may condemn you,—or your resolution raise. You may drift with the phrenzy of the whirlwind,—or be fastened for your part in the pacified effulgence of the sky.

— *The Art of England*, Lecture VI, p. 356.

THERE is no effect of sky possible in the lowlands which may not in equal perfection be seen among the hills; but there are effects by tens of thousands, forever invisible and inconceivable to the inhabitant of the plains, manifested among the hills in the course of one day. The mere power of familiarity with the clouds, of walking with them, and above them, alters and renders clear our whole conception of the baseless architecture of the sky; and for the beauty of it, there is more in a single wreath of early cloud, pacing its way up an avenue of pines, or pausing among the points of their fringes, than in all the white heaps that fill the arched sky of the

plains from one horizon to the other. And of the nobler cloud manifestations,—the breaking of their troublous seas against the crags, their black spray sparkling with lightning; or the going forth of the morning along their pavements of moving marble, level-laid between dome and dome of snow;—of these things there can be as little imagination or understanding in an inhabitant of the plains as of the scenery of another planet than his own.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part IV, Chap. XX, p. 432.

THE moss-lands have one great advantage over the forest-lands, namely, sight of the sky. And not only sight of it, but continual and beneficent help from it. What they have to separate them from barren rock, namely, their moss and streams, being dependent on its direct help, not on great rivers coming from distant mountain chains, nor on vast tracks of ocean-mist coming up at evening, but on the continued play and change of sun and cloud. . . .

. . . It would be strange, indeed, if there were no beauty in the phenomena by which this great renovating and purifying work is done. And it is done almost entirely

by the great Angel of the Sea—rain: the Angel, observe, the messenger sent to a special place on a special errand. Not the diffused perpetual presence of the burden of mist, but the going and returning of intermittent cloud. All turns upon this intermittence. Soft moss on stone and rock;—cave-fern of tangled glen; wayside well—perennial, patient, silent, clear; stealing through its square font of rough-hewn stone: ever thus deep—no more—which the winter wreck sullies not, the summer thirst wastes not, incapable of stain as of decline—where the fallen leaf floats undecayed, and the insect darts undefiling. Cressed brook and ever-eddying river, lifted even in flood scarcely over its stepping stones,—but through all sweet summer keeping tremulous music with harp-strings of dark water among the silver fingering of the pebbles. Far away in the south the strong river gods have all hasted, and gone down to the sea. Wasted and burning, white furnaces of blasting sand, their broad beds lie ghastly and bare; but here the soft wings of the Sea Angel droop still with dew, and the shadows of their plumes falter on the hills: strange laughings, and glitterings of silver streamlets,

born suddenly, and twined about the mossy heights in trickling tinsel, answering to them as they wave.

Nor are those wings colorless. We habitually think of the rain-cloud only as dark and gray: not knowing that we owe to it perhaps the fairest, though not the most dazzling of the hues of heaven. Often in our English mornings, the rain-clouds in the dawn form soft level fields, which melt imperceptibly into the blue: or when of less extent, gather into apparent bars, crossing the sheets of broader cloud above; and all these bathed throughout in an unspeakable light of pure rose-color, and purple, and amber, and blue; not shining, but misty-soft: the barred masses, when seen nearer composed of clusters or tresses of cloud, like floss silk; looking as if each knot were a little swathe or sheaf of lighted rain. No clouds form such skies, none are so tender, various, inimitable.

For these are the robes of love of the Angel of the Sea. To these that name is chiefly given, the "spreading of the clouds," from their extent, their gentleness, their fulness of rain. Note how they are spoken of in Job xxxvi. v. 29-31. "By them judgeth he the people: he giveth meat in abun-

dance. With clouds he covereth the light. He hath hidden the light in his hands, and commanded that it should not return. He speaks of it to his friend; that it is his possession, and that he may ascend thereto.

That, then, is the Sea Angel's message to God's friends: *that*, the meaning of those strange golden lights and purple flushes before the morning rain. The rain is sent to judge, and feed us; but the light is the possession of the friends of God, and they may ascend thereto,—where the tabernacle veil will cross and part its rays no more.

But the Angel of the Sea has also another message,—in the “great rain of his strength,” rain of trial, sweeping away ill-set foundations. Then his robe is not spread softly over the whole heaven, as a veil, but sweeps back from his shoulders, ponderous, oblique, terrible—leaving his sword-arm free.

The approach of trial-storm, hurricane-storm, is indeed in its vastness as the clouds of the softer rain. But it is not slow nor horizontal, but swift and steep: swift with passion of ravenous winds, steep as slope of some dark, hollowed hill. The fronting clouds come leaning forward, one

thrusting the other aside, or on ; impatient, ponderous, impendent, like globes of rock, tossed of Titans — Ossa on Olympus — but hurled forward all, in one wave of cloud-lava-cloud whose throat is as a sepulchre. Fierce behind them rages the oblique wrath of the rain, white as ashes, dense as showers of driven steel: the pillars of it full of ghastly life: Rain-Furies, shrieking as they fly:—scourging, as with whips of scorpions:—the earth ringing and trembling under them, heaven wailing wildly, the trees stooped blindly down, covering their faces, quivering in every leaf with horror, ruins of their branches flying by them like black stubble. . . .

. . . Nevertheless, the rain-cloud was, on the whole, looked upon by the Greeks as beneficent, so that it is boasted of in the Ædipus Coloneus for its perpetual feeding of the springs of Cephissus, and elsewhere often: and the opening song of the rain-cloud in Aristophanes is entirely beautiful. . . .

. . . These heavens, then, “declare the *glory* of God” that is, the light of God, the eternal glory, stable and changeless. . . .

“And the firmament showeth His *handiwork*.”

The clouds, prepared by the hand of God for the help of man, varied in their ministration—veiling the inner splendor—show, not His eternal glory, but His daily handiwork. . . . “Remember that thou magnify His work which men behold.”

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VII, Chap. IV, pp. 180-197.

ABOUT THE EARTH.

RISE up actively on the earth; learn what there is in it, know its color and form, and the full measure and make of it.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. III, p. 60.

IV.

ABOUT THE EARTH.

GOD has lent us the Earth for our life; it is a great entail.

— *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Chap. VI, p. 176.

I HOPE the children of this generation may know more than their fathers, and that the study of the Earth, which hitherto has shown them little more than the monsters of a chaotic past, may at last interpret for them the beautiful work of the creative present, and lead them day by day to find a loveliness, till then unthought of, in the rock, and a value, till then uncounted, in the gem.

— *In Montibus Sanctis*, Chap. I, p. 122.

THERE are, broadly, three great demonstrable periods of the Earth's history. That in which it was crystallized; that in which it was sculptured; and that in which it is now being unsculptured, or deformed. These three periods interlace with each other, and gradate into each other,—as the periods of human life do. Something dies in the child on the day that it is born,—

something is born in the man on the day that he dies; nevertheless, his life is broadly divided into youth, strength, and decrepitude. In such clear sense, the Earth has its three ages; of their length we know as yet nothing, except that it has been greater than any man had imagined. — *Deucalion*, Vol. I, Chap. I, p. 22.

THE fruit of Earth, and its waters, and its light — such as the strength of the pure rock can grow — such as the unthwarted sun in his season brings — these are your inheritance. — *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. I, Letter XVI, p. 219.

“AND God said, Let the waters which are under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear.”

We do not, perhaps, often enough consider the deep significance of this sentence. We are too apt to receive it as the description of an event vaster only in its extent, not in its nature, than the compelling the Red Sea to draw back, that Israel might pass by. We imagine the Deity in like manner rolling the waves of the greater ocean together on a heap, and setting bars and doors to them eternally. But there is a far deeper meaning than this in the solemn words of Genesis, and in the correspondent verse of the Psalm,

“His hands prepared the dry land.” Up to that moment the earth had been *void*, for it had been *without form*. The command that the waters should be *gathered* was the command that the earth should be *sculptured*. The sea was not driven to his place in suddenly restrained rebellion, but withdrawn to his place in perfect and patient obedience. The dry land appeared, not in level sands, forsaken by the surges, which those surges might again claim for their own: but in range beyond range of swelling hill and iron rock, forever to claim kindred with the firmament, and be companioned by the clouds of heaven.

What space of time was in reality occupied by the “day” of Genesis, is not at present, of any importance for us to consider. By what furnaces of fire the adamant was melted, and by what wheels of earthquake it was torn, and by what teeth of glacier and weight of sea-waves it was engraven and finished into its perfect form, we may perhaps endeavor to conjecture: but here, as in few words the work is summed by the historian, so in few broad thoughts it should be comprehended by us; and as we read the mighty sentence, “Let the dry land appear,” we should try to follow the finger of God, as

it engraved upon the stone tables of the earth the letters and the law of its everlasting form: as, gulf by gulf, the channels of the deep were ploughed; and, cape by cape, the lines were traced, with Divine foreknowledge of the shores that were to limit the nations; and, chain by chain, the mountain walls were lengthened forth, and their foundations fastened forever; and the compass was set upon the face of the depth, and the fields, and the highest part of the dust of the world were made; and the right hand of Christ first strewed the snow on Lebanon, and smoothed the slopes of Calvary.

It is not, I repeat, always needful, in many respects it is not possible, to conjecture the manner, or the time, in which this work was done; but it is deeply necessary for all men to consider the magnificence of the accomplished purpose, and the depth of the wisdom and love which are manifested in the ordinances of the hills. For observe, in order to bring the world into the form which it now bears, it was not mere *sculpture* that was needed; the mountains could not stand for a day unless they were formed by materials altogether different from those which constitute the lower hills and the surfaces of the

valleys. A harder substance had to be prepared for every mountain chain; yet not so hard but that it might be capable of crumbling down into earth fit to nourish the alpine forest and the alpine flower; not so hard but that, in the midst of the utmost majesty of its enthroned strength, there should be seen on it the seal of death, and the writing of the same sentence that had gone forth against the human frame, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." And with this perishable substance the most majestic forms were to be framed that were consistent with the safety of man; and the peak was to be lifted, and the cliff rent, as high and as steeply as was possible, in order to permit the shepherd to feed his flocks upon the slope, and the cottage to nestle beneath their shadow.

And observe, two distinct ends were to be accomplished in the doing this. It was, indeed, absolutely necessary that such eminences should be created, in order to fit the earth in anywise for human habitation; for without mountains the air could not be purified, nor the flowing of the rivers sustained, and the earth must have become for the most part desert plain, or stagnant marsh.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. VII, pp. 122-124.

WHAT infinite wonderfulness there is in vegetation, considered, as indeed it is, as the means by which the earth becomes the companion of man—his friend and his teacher! In the conditions which we have traced in its rocks, there could only be seen preparation for his existence;—the characters which enable him to live on it safely, and to work with it easily—in all these it has been inanimate and passive; but vegetation is to it as an imperfect soul, given to meet the soul of man. The earth in its depths must remain dead and cold, incapable except of slow crystalline change; but at its surface, which human beings look upon and deal with, it ministers to them through a veil of strange intermediate being: which breathes, but has no voice; moves, but cannot leave its appointed place; passes through life without consciousness, to death without bitterness; wears the beauty of youth, without its passion; and declines to the weakness of age, without its regret.

And in this mystery of intermediate being, entirely subordinate to us, with which we can deal as we choose, having just the greater power as we have the less responsibility for our treatment of the unsuffering creature, most of the pleasures which we

need from the external world are gathered, and most of the lessons we need are written, all kinds of precious grace and teaching being united in this link between the Earth and Man; wonderful in universal adaptation to his need, desire and discipline; God's daily preparation of the earth for him, with beautiful means of life. First a carpet to make it soft for him; then, a colored fantasy of embroidery thereon; then, tall spreading foliage to shade him from sunheat, and shade also the fallen rain, that it may not dry quickly back into the clouds, but stay to nourish the springs among the moss. Stout wood to bear this leafage; easily to be cut, yet tough and light, to make houses for him, or instruments (lance-shaft, or plough-handle, according to his temper); useless it had been, if harder; useless, if less fibrous; useless, if less elastic. Winter comes, and the shade of leafage falls away, to let the sun warm the earth; the strong boughs remain, breaking the strength of winter winds. The seeds which are to prolong the race, innumerable according to the need, are made beautiful and palatable, varied into infinitude of appeal to the fancy of man, or provision for his service; cold juice, or glowing spice, or balm, or incense, softening oil, preserving

resin, medicine of styptic, febrifuge or lulling charm; and all these presented in forms of endless change. Fragility or force, softness and strength, in all degrees and aspects; unerring uprightness, as of temple pillars, or undivided wandering of feeble tendrils on the ground; mighty resistances of rigid arm and limb to the storms of ages, or wavings to and fro with faintest pulse of summer streamlet. Roots cleaving the strength of rock, or binding the transience of the sand; crests basking in sunshine of the desert, or hiding by dripping spring and lightless cave; foliage far tossing in entangled fields beneath every wave of ocean — clothing with variegated, everlasting films, the peaks of the trackless mountains or ministering at cottage doors to every gentlest passion and simplest joy of humanity.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VI, Chap. I, pp. 22-24.

By truth of earth, we mean the faithful representation of the facts and forms of the bare ground, considered as entirely divested of vegetation, through whatever disguise, or under whatever modification the clothing of the landscape may occasion. . . .

. . . The laws of the organization of the Earth are distinct and fixed as those of the animal frame, simpler and broader, but

equally authoritative and inviolable. . . . They are in the landscape the foundation of all other truths—the most necessary, therefore, even if they were not in themselves attractive; but they are as beautiful as they are essential. . . .

We find, according to this its internal structure . . . that the Earth may be considered as divided into three great classes of formation, which geology has already named for us. Primary—the rocks, which, though in position lower than all others, rise to form the central peaks, or interior nuclei of all mountain ranges. Secondary—the rocks, which are laid in beds above these, and which form the greater proportion of all hill scenery. Tertiary—the light beds of sand, gravel, and clay, which are strewed upon the surface of all, forming plains and habitable territory for man.

—*Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part II, Sect. IV, Chap. I, pp. 25-30.

MOUNTAINS are, to the rest of the body of the earth, what violent muscular action is to the body of man. The muscles and tendons of its anatomy are in the mountain, brought out with fierce and convulsive energy, full of expression, passion and strength; the plains and the lower hills

are the repose and the effortless motion of the frame, when its muscles lie dormant and concealed beneath the lines of its beauty, yet ruling those lines in their every undulation. This, then, is the first grand principle of the truth of the earth.

The spirit of the hills is action, that of the lowlands, repose; and between them there is to be found every variety of motion and of rest: from the inactive plain, sleeping like the firmament, with cities for stars, to the fiery peaks, which, with heaving bosoms and exulting limbs, with the clouds drifting like hair from their bright foreheads, lift up their Titan hands to Heaven, saying, "I live forever!"

But there is this difference between the action of the earth, and that of a living creature, that while the exerted limbs mark its bones and tendons through the flesh, the excited earth casts off the flesh altogether, and its bones come out from beneath. Mountains are the bones of the earth, their highest peaks are invariably those parts of its anatomy which in the plains lie buried under five and twenty thousand feet of solid thickness of superincumbent soil, and which spring up in the mountain ranges in vast pyramids or wedges,

flinging their garment of earth away from them on each side. The masses of the lower hills are laid over and against their sides, like the masses of lateral masonry against the skeleton arch of an unfinished bridge, except that they slope up to and lean against the central ridge; and finally, upon the slopes of these lower hills are strewed the level beds of sprinkled gravel, sand, and clay, which form the extent of the champaign. Here then is another grand principle of the truth of earth, that the mountains must come from under all, and be the support of all, and that everything else must be laid in their arms, heap above heap, the plains being the uppermost. Such being the structure of the framework of the earth, it is next to be remembered, that all soil whatsoever, wherever it is accumulated in greater quantity than is sufficient to nourish the moss of the wall-flower, has been so, either by the direct transporting agency of water, or under the guiding influence and power of water.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part II, Sect. IV, pp. 27, 28.

THE Earth, as a tormented and trembling ball, may have rolled in space for myriads of ages before humanity was formed from its

dust; and as a devastated ruin it may continue to roll, when all that dust shall again have been mingled with ashes that never were warmed by life, or polluted by sin. But for us the intelligible and substantial fact is that the Earth has been brought, by forces we know not of, into a form fitted for our habitation; on that form a gradual, but destructive, change is continually taking place. . . . But in the hand of the great Architect . . . time and decay are as much the instruments of His purpose as the forces by which He first led forth the troops of hills in leaping flocks: the lightning and the torrent and the wasting and weariness of innumerable ages, all bear their part in the working out of one consistent plan; and the Builder of the temple forever stands beside His work, appointing the stone that is to fall, and the pillar that is to be abased, and guiding all the seeming wildness of chance and change, into ordained splendors and foreseen harmonies.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. XII, pp. 183, 185.

THESE are the two essential instincts of humanity: the love of Order, and the love of Kindness. By the love of order the moral energy is to deal with the earth, and to dress it and keep it.

— *Lectures on Art*, Lecture III, p. 251.

THE fulfilment of all human liberty is in the peaceful inheritance of the earth, with its "herb yielding seed, and fruit tree yielding fruit" after his kind; the pasture or arable land, and the blossoming, or wooded and fruited, land uniting the final elements of life and peace, for body and soul. . . . And as the work of war and sin has always been the devastation of this blossoming earth, whether by spoil or idleness, so the work of peace and virtue is also that of the first day of Paradise, to "Dress it and to keep it." And that will always be the song of perfectly accomplished Liberty, in her industry, and rest, and shelter from troubled thoughts in the calm of the fields.

— *Time and Tide*, Letter XXIV, pp. 227, 228.

EARTH,—meant to be nourishing for you and blossoming. — *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. I, Letter V, p. 69.

WHAT hinders us from covering as much of the world as we like with pleasant shade, and pure blossom, and goodly fruit? Who forbids its valleys to be covered over with corn, till they laugh and sing? Who prevents its dark forests, ghostly and uninhabitable, from being changed into infinite orchards, wreathing the hills with frail-

floretted snow, far away to the half-lighted horizon of April, and flushing the face of all the autumnal earth with glow of clustered food?

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Chap. I, p. 22.

Do you remember the questioning to Job? — “Hath the rain a father — and who hath begotten the drops of dew, — the hoary frost of heaven — who hath gendered it?”

That rain and frost of heaven; and the earth which they loose and bind; these, and the labor of your hands to divide them, and subdue, are your wealth. . . .

The fruit of Earth, and its waters, and its light — such as the strength of the pure rock can grow — such as the unthwarted sun in his season brings — these are your inheritance.

— *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. I, Letter XVI, p. 219.

As THE first laws of line may best be learned in the lines of the Earth, so also the first laws of light may best be learned in the light of the Earth. Not the hawthorn blossom, nor the pearl, nor the grain of mustard or manna, — not the smallest round thing that lies as the hoar-frost on the ground — but around it, and upon it, are illuminated the laws that bade the Evening

and the Morning be the first day. . . . Whatever the position of the Sun, and whatever the rate of motion of any point on the Earth through the minutes, hours, or days of twilight, the meeting of the margins of night and day is always constant in the breadth of its zone of gradually expiring light; and that in relation to the whole mass of the globe, that passage from "glow to gloom" is as trenchant and swift as between the crescent of the new moon and the dimness of the "Auld mune in her airms."

— *The Laws of Fésolé*, Chap. X, p. 118.

THE simple fact that the sky is brighter than the Earth, is *not* a precious truth, unless the Earth itself be first understood. Despise the Earth, or slander it; fix your eyes on its gloom and forget its loveliness; and we do not thank you for your languid or despairing perception of brightness in heaven.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Chap. III, p. 60.

I FEEL more strongly every day, that no evidence to be collected within historical periods can be accepted as any clue to the great tendencies of geological change: but that the great laws which never fail, and to which all change is subordinate, appear such

as to accomplish a gradual advance to lovelier order, and more calmly, yet more deeply, animated Rest. Nor has this conviction ever fastened itself upon me more distinctly, than during my endeavor to trace the laws which govern the lowly framework of the dust. For, through all the phases of transition and dissolution, there seems to be a continual effort to raise itself into a higher state: and a measured gain, through the fierce revulsion and slow renewal of the earth's frame, in beauty, and order, and permanence. The soft white sediments of the sea draw themselves, in process of time, into smooth knots of sphered symmetry; burdened and strained under increase of pressure, they pass into a nascent marble; scorched by fervent heat, they brighten and blanch into the snowy rock of Paros and Carrara. The dark drift of the inland river, or stagnant slime of inland pool and lake, divides, or resolves itself as it dries, into layers of its several elements: slowly purifying each by the patient withdrawal of it from the anarchy of the mass in which it was mingled. Contracted by increasing draught, till it must shatter into fragments, it infuses continually a finer ichor into the opening veins, and finds in its weakness the

first rudiments of a perfect strength. Rent at last, rock from rock, nay, atom from atom, and tormented in lambent fire, it knits, through the fusion, the fibres of a perennial endurance; and, during countless subsequent centuries, declining, or rather let me say, rising to repose, finishes the infallible lustre of its crystalline beauty, under harmonies of laws which are wholly beneficent, because wholly inexorable.

— *The Ethics of the Dust*, Chap. X, pp. 139, 140.

ABOUT 500 B.C. . . . at that culminating period of the Greek religion we find, under one governing Lord of all things, four subordinate elemental forces, and four spiritual powers living in them, and commanding them. The elements are of course the well-known four of the ancient world—the Earth, the waters, the fire, and the air. . . . They are the rulers of the Earth that we tread upon, and the air that we breathe. . . . The rule of the first spirit, Demeter, the Earth Mother, is over the Earth, first, as the origin of all life—the dust from whence we were taken. . . .

Secondly, as the receiver of all things back at last into silence—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

— *The Queen of the Air*, Chap. I, p. 242.

IN the children of noble races, trained by surrounding art, and at the same time in the practice of great deeds, there is an intense delight in the landscape of their country as *memorial*; a sense not taught to them, nor teachable to any others; but in them, innate; and the seal and reward of persistence in great national life:—the obedience and the peace of ages having extended gradually the glory of the revered ancestors also to the ancestral land; until the Motherhood of the dust, the mystery of the Demeter from whose bosom we came, and to whose bosom we return, surrounds and inspires, everywhere, the local awe of field and fountain; the sacredness of landmark that none may remove, and of men that none may pollute, while records of proud days, and of dear persons, make every rock monumental with ghostly inscription, and every path lovely with noble desolateness. — *Lectures on Art*, Inaugural, p. 212.

WHEREVER there are high mountains, there are hard rocks. Earth, at its strongest, has difficulty in sustaining itself above the clouds; and could not hold itself in any noble height, if knitted infirmly.

— *Deucalion*, Chap. XV, p. 153.

THE present conformation of the earth appears dictated by supreme wisdom and kindness. And yet its former state must have been different from what it is now; as its present one from that which it must assume hereafter. Is this, therefore, the earth's prime into which we are born; or is it, with all its beauty, only the wreck of Paradise?

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. XII, p. 182.

EARTH and Air:—The deep of air that surrounds the earth enters into union with the earth at its surface, and with its waters; so as to be the apparent cause of their ascending into life. First, it warms them, and shades, at once, staying the heat of the sun's rays in its own body, but warding their force with its clouds.

It warms and cools at once, with traffic of balm and frost; so that the white wreaths are withdrawn from the field of the Swiss peasant by the glow of Libyan rock. It gives its own strength to the sea; forms and fills every cell of its foam; sustains the precipices, and designs the valleys of its waves; gives the gleam to their moving under the night, and the white fire to their plains under sunrise; lifts their voices along

the rocks, bears above them the spray of birds, pencils through them the dimpling of unfooted sands. It gathers out of them a portion in the hollow of its hand; dyes, with that, the hills into dark blue, and their glaciers with dying rose: inlays with that, for sapphire, the dome in which it has to set the cloud; shapes out of that the heavenly flocks: divides them, numbers, cherishes, bears them on its bosom, calls them to their journeys, waits by their rest; feeds them from the brooks that cease not, and strews with them the dews that cease. It spins and weaves their fleece into wild tapestry, rends it, and renews; and flits and flames, and whispers, among the golden threads, thrilling them with a plectrum of strange fire that traverses them to and fro, and is enclosed in them like life.

It enters into the surface of the earth, subdues it, and falls together with it into fruitful dust, from which can be moulded flesh: it joins itself, in dew, to the substance of adamant; and becomes the green leaf out of the dry ground; it enters into the separated shapes of the earth it has tempered, commands the ebb and flow of the current of their life, fills their limbs with its own lightness, measures their existence by its in-

dwelling pulse, moulds upon their lips the words by which one soul can be known to another; is to them the hearing of the ear, and the beating of the heart; and, passing away, leaves them to the peace that hears and moves no more.

— *The Queen of the Air*, Essay II, pp. 305, 306.

You all probably know that the ochreous stain, which, perhaps, is often thought to spoil the basin of your spring, is iron in a state of rust. . . . It is not a fault in the iron, but a virtue, to be so fond of getting rusted, for in that condition it fulfils its most important functions in the universe, and most kindly duties to mankind. Nay, in a certain sense, and almost a literal one, we may say that iron rusted is Living; but when pure or polished, Dead.

You all probably know that in the mixed air we breathe, the part of it essentially needful to us is called oxygen; and that this substance is to all animals, in the most accurate sense of the word, "breath of life." Now it is this very same air which the iron breathes when it gets rusty. It takes the oxygen from the atmosphere as eagerly as we do, though it uses it differently. The iron keeps all that it gets; we, and other

animals, part with it again; but the metal absolutely keeps what it has once received of this aërial gift; and the ochreous dust which we so much despise is, in fact, just so much nobler than pure iron, in so far as it is *iron and the air*. Nobler, and more useful—for indeed, the main service of this metal, and of all other metals, to us, is . . . in making the ground we feed from, and nearly all the substances first needful to our existence. For these are all nothing but metals and oxygen—metals with breath put into them.

Sand, lime, clay, and the rest of the earths—potash and soda, and the rest of the alkalies—are all of them metals which have undergone this, so to speak, vital change, and have been rendered fit for the service of man by permanent unity with the purest air which he himself breathes. . . .

. . . You think, perhaps, that your iron is wonderfully useful in a pure form, but how would you like the world, if all your meadows, instead of grass, grew nothing but iron wire—if all your arable ground, instead of being made of sand and clay, were suddenly turned into flat surfaces of steel—if the whole earth, instead of its green and glowing sphere, rich with forest

and flower, showed nothing, but the image of the vast furnace of a ghastly engine—a globe of black, lifeless, excoriated metal? It would be that,—probably it was once that; but assuredly it would be, were it not that all the substance of which it is made sucks and breathes the brilliancy of the atmosphere; and as it breathes, softening from its merciless hardness, it falls into fruitful and beneficent dust; gathering itself again into the earths from which we feed, and the stones from which we build;—into the rocks that frame the mountains, and the sands that bind the sea.

Hence it is impossible for you to take up the most insignificant pebble at your feet, without being able to read, if you like, this curious lesson in it. You look upon it at first as if it were earth only, “Nay” it answers, “I am not earth—I am earth and air in one; part of that blue heaven which you love, and long for, is already in me; it is all my life—without it I should be nothing, and able for nothing: I could not minister to you, nor nourish you—I should be a cruel and helpless thing; but, because there is, according to my need and place in creation, a kind of soul in me, I have become capable of good, and helpful in the circles of vitality.”

Thus far the same interest attaches to all the earths, and all the metals of which they are made; but a deeper interest, and larger beneficence belong to that ochreous earth of iron which stains the marble of your springs. It stains much besides that marble. It stains the great earth wheresoever you can see it, far and wide—it is the coloring substance appointed to color the globe for the sight, as well as subdue it to the service of man.

You have just seen your hills covered with snow, and, perhaps, have enjoyed, at first, the contrast of their fair white with the dark blocks of pine woods; but have you ever considered how you would like them always white—not pure white, but dirty white—the white of thaw with all the chill of snow in it, but none of its brightness? That is what the color of the earth would be without its iron; that would be its color, not here or there only, but in all places, and at all times. Follow out that idea till you get it in some detail. Think first of your pretty gravel walks in your gardens, yellow and fine, like plots of sunshine between the flower-beds; fancy them all suddenly turned to the color of ashes. That is what they would be without iron ochre. Think of your winding

walks over the common, as warm to the eye as they are dry to the foot, and imagine them all laid down suddenly with gray cinders. Then pass beyond the common into the country, and pause at the first ploughed field that you see sweeping up the hill sides in the sun, with its deep brown furrows, and wealth of ridges, all a-glow, heaved aside by the ploughshare, like deep folds of a mantle of russet velvet — fancy it all changed suddenly into grisly furrows in a field of mud. That is what it would be without iron. Pass on, in fancy, over hill and dale, till you reach the bending line of the sea shore; go down upon its breezy beach — watch the white foam flashing among the amber of it, and all the blue sea embayed in belts of gold; then fancy those circlets of far sweeping shore suddenly put into mounds of mourning — all those golden sands turned into gray slime, the fairies no more able to call to each other, “Come unto these yellow sands,” but “Come into these drab sands.” That is what they would be, without iron. . . . Thus far we have only been considering the use and pleasantness of iron in the common earth of clay. But there are three kinds of earth which in mixed mass and prevalent quantity, form the world. Those are in common lan-

guage, the earths of clay, of lime, and of flint. Many other elements are mingled with these in sparing quantities; but the great frame and substance of the earth is made of these three, so that wherever you stand on solid ground, in any country of the globe, the thing that is mainly under your feet will be either clay, limestone, or some condition of the earth of flint, mingled with both.

These being what we have usually to deal with, Nature seems to have set herself to make these three substances as interesting to us, and as beautiful for us, as she can. The clay, being a soft and changeable substance, she doesn't take much pains about, till it is baked; she brings the color into it only when it receives a permanent form. But the limestone and flint she paints, in her own way, in their native state: and her object in painting them seems to be much the same as in her painting of flowers; to draw us, careless and idle human creatures, to watch her a little, and see what she is about—that being on the whole good for us,—her children. For Nature is always carrying on very strange work with this limestone and flint of hers; laying down beds of them at the bottom of the sea; building islands out of the sea; filling chinks and

veins in mountains with curious treasures; petrifying mosses, and trees, and shells; in fact carrying on all sorts of business, subterranean or submarine, which it would be highly desirable for us, who profit and live by it, to notice as it goes on. And apparently to lead us to do this, she makes picture-books for us of limestone and flint; and tempts us, like foolish children as we are, to read her books by the pretty colors in them. The pretty colors in her limestone-books form those variegated marbles which all mankind have taken delight to polish and build with from the beginning of time; and the pretty colors in her flint-books form those agates, jaspers, cornelians, bloodstones, onyxes, cairngorms, chrysoprases, which men have in like manner taken delight to cut, and polish, and make ornaments of, from the beginning of time; and yet, so much of babies are they, and so fond of looking at the pictures instead of reading the book, that I question whether, after six thousand years of cutting and polishing, there are above two or three people out of any given hundred, who know, or care to know, how a bit of agate or a bit of marble was made, or painted.

How it was made, may not be always very

easy to say; but with what it was painted there is no manner of question. All those beautiful violet veinings and variegations of the marbles of Sicily and Spain, the glowing orange and amber colors of those of Siena, the deep russet of that Rosso antico, and the blood-color of all the precious jaspers that enrich the temples of Italy; and finally, all the lovely transitions of tint in the pebbles of Scotland and the Rhine, which form, though not the most precious, by far the most interesting portion of our modern jewellers' work;—all these are painted by Nature with this one material only, variously proportioned and applied—the oxide of iron. . . .

But this is not all, nor the best part of the work of iron. Its service in producing these beautiful stones is only rendered to rich people, who can afford to quarry and polish them. But Nature paints for all the world, poor and rich together; and while, therefore, she thus adorns the innermost rocks of her hills, to tempt your investigation, or indulge your luxury,—she paints far more carefully the outsides of the hills, which are for the eyes of the shepherd and the ploughman . . . Have you ever considered, in speaking as we do so often of distant blue

hills, what it is that makes them blue? To a certain extent it is distance; but distance alone will not do it. Many hills look white, however distant. That lovely dark purple color of our Welch and Highland hills is owing, not to their distance merely, but to their rocks. Some of their rocks are, indeed, too dark to be beautiful, being black or ashy gray; owing to imperfect and porous structure. But when you see this dark color dashed with russet and blue, and coming out in masses among the green ferns, so purple that you can hardly tell at first whether it is rock or heather, then you must thank your old friend, the oxide of iron.

But this is not all. It is necessary for the beauty of hill scenery that Nature should color not only her soft rocks, but her hard ones; and she colors them with the same thing, only more beautifully. Perhaps you have wondered at my use of the word "purple" so often of stones: but the Greeks, and still more the Romans, who had profound respect for purple, used it of stone long ago. You have all heard of "porphyry" as among the most precious of the harder massive stones. The color which gave it that noble name, as well as that which gives

the flush to all the rosy granite of Egypt — yes, and to the rosier summits of the Alps themselves — is still owing to the same substance — your humble oxide of iron.

The Two Paths, Lecture V, pp. 104-111.

JEWELS OF THE EARTH.

THE history of a mineral is not given by ascertainment of the number or the angles of the planes of its crystals, but by ascertaining the manner in which those crystals originate, increase, and associate.

— *In Montibus Sanctis*, Chap. I, p. 116.

V.

JEWELS OF THE EARTH.

IN the handful of shingle which you gather from the sea-beach, which the indiscriminate sea, with equality of eternal form, has only educated to be, every one, round, you will see little difference between the noble and mean stones. But the jeweller's trenchant education of them will tell you another story. Even the meanest will be better for it, but the noblest so much better that you can class the two together no more. The fair veins and colors are all clear now, and so stern is Nature's intent regarding this, that not only will the polish show which is best, but the best will take the most polish. You shall not merely see they have more virtue than the others, but see that more of virtue more clearly; and the less virtue there is, the more dimly you shall see what there is of it.—*Time and Tide*, Letter XXV, p. 230.

PEBBLE — or crystal : in Scotland the main questions respecting these two main forms of silica are put to us, with a close solicitude, by the beautiful conditions of agate, and the glowing colors of the Cairngorm, which

have always variegated and illuminated the favorite jewelry of Scottish laird and lassie.

May I hope, with especial reference to the

favorite gem

Of Scotland's mountain diadem,

to prevail on some Scottish mineralogist to take up the . . . subject of the relation of color in minerals to their state of substance; why, for instance, large and well-developed quartz crystals are frequently topaz color or smoke color,— never rose-color; while massive quartz may be rose-color, and pure white or gray, but never smoke color; again, why amethyst quartz may continually, be infinitely complex and multiplex in crystallization, but never warped; while smoky quartz may be continually found warped, but never, in the amethystine way, multiplex; why, again, smoky quartz and Cairngorm are continually found in short crystals, but never in long slender ones,— as, to take instance in another mineral, white beryl is usually short or even tabular, and green beryl long, almost in proportion to its purity?

— *In Montibus Sanctis*, Chap. I, p. 112.

A SAPPHIRE is the same stone as a ruby; both are the pure earth of clay crystallized. No one knows why one is red and the other

blue. A diamond is pure coal crystallized. An opal, pure flint—in a state of fixed jelly.

—*Hortus Inclusus*, p. 66.

PICK up the ruby . . . and look carefully at the beautiful hexagonal lines which gleam on its surface. . . . I do not know what is the exact method of a ruby's construction; but you see by these lines, what fine construction there *is*, even in this hardest of stones (after the diamond,) which usually appears as a massive lump or knot. There is therefore no real mineralogical distinction between needle crystals and knotted crystals, but, practically crystallized masses throw themselves into one of three groups . . . and appear either as Needles, as Folia, or as Knots; when they are in needles (or fibres) they make the stones or rocks formed out of them '*fibrous*'; when they are in folia, they make them '*foliated*'; when they are in knots (or grains) '*granular*.' Fibrous rocks are comparatively rare, in mass; but fibrous minerals are innumerable. . . .

. . . Crystals have a limited, though a stern, code of morals;—and their essential virtues are but two;—the first is to be pure, and the second to be well shaped.

"Pure! Does that mean clear—trans-

parent?" "No; unless in the case of a transparent substance. You cannot have a transparent crystal of gold; but you may have a perfectly pure one." . . .

. . . I call their shape only their second virtue, because it depends on time and accident, and things which the crystal cannot help. If it is cooled too quickly, or shaken, it must take what shape it can; but it seems as if, even then, it had in itself the power of rejecting impurity, if it has crystalline life enough.— *The Ethics of the Dust*, Lecture IV, p. 53, V, p. 57.

It is seldom that any mineral crystallises alone. Usually two or three, under quite different crystalline laws, form together. They do this absolutely without flaw or fault, when they are in fine temper: and observe what this signifies. It signifies that the two, or more, minerals of different natures agree, somehow, between themselves, how much space each will want; — agree which of them shall give away to the other at their junction; or in what measure each will accommodate itself to the other's shape! . . . They show exactly the same varieties of temper that human creatures might. Sometimes they yield the required place with perfect grace and courtesy; forming fantastic, but ex-

quisitely finished groups; and sometimes they will not yield at all; but fight furiously for their places, losing all shape and honor, and even their own likeness, in the contest.

There is, in reality, more likeness to some conditions of human feeling among stones than among plants. There is a far greater difference between kindly-tempered and ill-tempered crystals of the same mineral than between any two specimens of the same flower; and the friendships and wars of crystals depend more definitely and curiously on their varieties of disposition, than any association of flowers. Here, for instance, is a good garnet, living with good mica; one rich red, and the other silver white; the mica leaves exactly room enough for the garnet to crystallise comfortably in; and the garnet lives happily in its little white house; fitted to it, like a pholas in its cell. But here are wicked garnets living with wicked mica. See what ruin they make of each other! You cannot tell which is which; the garnets look like dull red stains on the crumbling stones. — *The Ethics of the Dust*, Chap. VI, pp. 71, 72.

IF you want to see the gracefulest and happiest caprices of which dust is capable you must go to the Hartz;—whether the

mountains be picturesque or not—the tricks which the goblins (as I am told) teach the crystals in them, are incomparably pretty. They work chiefly on the mind of a docile, bluish-colored, carbonate of lime; which comes out of a grey limestone. The goblins take the greatest possible care of its education, and see that nothing happens to it to hurt its temper; and when it may be supposed to have arrived at the crisis which is, to a well brought up mineral, what presentation at court is to a young lady—after which it is expected to set fashions—there's no end to its pretty ways of behaving. First it will make itself into pointed darts as fine as hoar-frost; here, it is changed into a white fur as fine as silk; here into little crowns and circlets, as bright as silver; as if for the gnome princesses to wear; here it is in beautiful little plates, for them to eat off; presently it is in towers which they might be imprisoned in; presently in caves and cells, where they may make nun-gnomes of themselves, and no gnome ever hear of them more; here is some of it in sheaves, like corn; here, some in drifts, like snow; here, some in rays, like stars; and, though these are, all of them, necessarily, shapes that the mineral takes in other places, they are all

taken here with such a grace that you recognise the high caste and breeding of the crystals wherever you meet them; and know at once they are Hartz-born.

— *The Ethics of the Dust*, Lecture VIII, pp. 101, 102.

TODAY I've found a very soft purple agate, that looks as if it were nearly melted away with pity for birds and flies . . . and another piece of hard wooden agate with only a little ragged sky of blue here and there . . . and a group of crystals with grass of Epidote inside. . . .

I am delighted with your lovely gift. . . . The perfection of the stone, its exquisite color, and flawless clearness, and the delicate cutting, which makes the light flash from it like a wave of the Lake, make it . . . a perfect mineralogical and heraldic jewel. . . .

— *Hortus Inclusus*, pp. 47, 48.

AGATES, I think of all stones, confess most of their past history. . . . Observe, first, you have the whole mass of the rock in motion, either contracting itself, and so gradually widening the cracks; or being compressed, and thereby closing them, and crushing their edges:—and if one part of its substance be softer, at the given temperature, than another,

probably squeezing that softer substance out into the veins. Then the veins themselves, when the rock leaves them open by its contraction, act with various power of suction upon its substance:—by capillary attraction when they are fine,—by that of pure vacuity when they are larger, or by changes in the constitution and condensation of the mixed gases with which they have been originally filled. Those gases themselves may be supplied in all variation of volume and power from below; or slowly, by the decomposition of the rocks themselves; and, at changing temperatures, must exert relatively changing forces of decomposition and combination on the walls of the veins they fill; while water, at every degree of heat and pressure (from beds of everlasting ice, alternate with cliffs of native rock, to volumes of red-hot, or white hot, steam), congeals, and drips, and throbs, and thrills, from crag to crag: and breathes from pulse to pulse of foaming or fiery arteries, whose beating is felt through chains of the great islands of the Indian seas, as your own pulses lift your bracelets, and makes whole kingdoms of the world quiver in deadly earthquake, as if they were light as aspen leaves. And, remember, the poor little crystals have to live their lives, and mind

their own affairs, in the midst of all this, as best they may. They are wonderfully like human creatures,—forget all that is going on if they don't see it, however dreadful; and never think what is to happen to-morrow. They are spiteful or loving, and indolent or painstaking, and orderly or licentious, with no thought whatever of the lava or the flood which may break over them any day; and evaporate them into air-bubbles, or wash them into a solution of salts. And you may look at them, once understanding the surrounding conditions of their fate, with an endless interest. You will see crowds of unfortunate little crystals, who have been forced to constitute themselves in a hurry, their dissolving element being fiercely scorched away; you will see them doing their best, bright and numberless, but tiny.

Then you will find indulged crystals, who have had centuries to form themselves in, and have changed their mind and ways continually; and have been tired, and taken heart again; and have been sick, and got well again; and thought they would try a different diet, and then thought better of it, and made but a poor use of their advantages, after all. And others you will see, who have begun life as wicked crystals; and then have

been impressed by alarming circumstances, and have become converted crystals, and behaved amazingly for a little while, and fallen away again, and ended, but discreditably, perhaps, even in decomposition: so that one doesn't know what will become of them.

And sometimes you will see deceitful crystals, that look as soft as velvet, and are deadly to all near them; and sometimes you will see deceitful crystals, that seem flint-edged, and are endlessly gentle and true wherever gentleness and truth are needed. And sometimes you will see little child-crystals put to school like school-girls, and made to stand in rows; and taken the greatest care of, and taught how to hold themselves up and behave; and sometimes you will see unhappy little child-crystals left to lie about in the dirt, and pick up their living, and learn manners, where they can. And, sometimes you will see fat crystals eating up thin ones, like great capitalists and little laborers; and politico-economic crystals teaching the stupid ones how to eat each other, and cheat each other; and foolish crystals getting in the way of wise ones; and impatient crystals spoiling the plans of patient ones, irreparably; just as things go on in the world.

And sometimes you may see hypocritical crystals taking the shape of others, though they are nothing like in their minds; and vampire crystals eating out the hearts of others; and hermit-crab crystals living in the shells of others; and all these, besides the two great companies of war and peace, who ally themselves, resolutely to attack, or resolutely to defend. And for the close, you see the broad shadow and deadly force of inevitable fate, above all this; you see the multitudes of crystals whose time has come; not a set time, as with us, but yet a time, sooner or later, when they must all give up their crystal ghosts;—when the strength by which they grew, and the breath given them to breathe, pass away from them; and they fail, and are consumed, and vanish away; and another generation is brought to life, framed out of their ashes. — *The Ethics of the Dust*, Chap. IX, pp. 118-120.

PERHAPS the best, though the most familiar example we could take of the nature and power of consistence, will be that of the possible changes in the dust we tread on.

Exclusive of animal decay, we can hardly arrive at a more absolute type of impurity than the mud or slime of a damp overtrodden path, in the outskirts of a manu-

facturing town. I do not say mud of the road, because that is mixed with animal refuse; but take merely an ounce or two of the blackest slime of a beaten footpath on a rainy day, near a large manufacturing town.

That slime we shall find in most cases, composed of clay (or brickdust, which is burnt clay) mixed with soot, a little sand, and water. All these elements are at helpless war with each other, and destroy reciprocally each other's nature and power, competing and fighting for place at every tread of your foot: — sand squeezing out clay, and clay squeezing out water, and soot meddling everywhere and defiling the whole.

Let us suppose that this ounce of mud is left in perfect rest, and that its elements gather together, like to like, so that their atoms may get into the closest relations possible.

Let the clay begin. Ridding itself of all foreign substance, it gradually becomes a white earth, already very beautiful; and fit, with help of congealing fire, to be made into finest porcelain, and painted on, and be kept in kings' palaces. But such artificial consistence is not its best. Leave it still quiet to follow its own instincts of unity, and

it becomes not only white, but clear; not only clear, but hard; not only clear and hard, but so set that it can deal with light in a wonderful way, and gather out of it the loveliest blue rays only, refusing the rest. We call that a sapphire.

Such being the consummation of the clay, we give similar permission of quiet to the sand. It also becomes, first, a white earth, then proceeds to grow clear and hard, and at last arranges itself in mysterious, infinitely fine, parallel lines, which have the power of reflecting not merely the blue rays, but the blue, green, purple, and red rays in the greatest beauty in which they can be seen through any hard material whatsoever.

We call it then an opal.

In next order the soot sets to work: it cannot make itself white at first, but instead of being discouraged, tries harder and harder, and comes out clear at last, and the hardest thing in the world; and for the blackness that it had, obtains in exchange the power of reflecting all the rays of the sun at once in the vividest blaze that any solid thing can shoot. We call it then a diamond.

THE black thing, which is one of the prettiest of the very few pretty black things in the world, is called 'Tourmaline.' It may be transparent, and green or red as well as black, but this is the commonest state of it,—opaque, and as black as jet.

— *Ethics of the Dust*, Lecture IX, p. 111.

SEIZE firmly that first idea of the manna, as the type of the bread which is the Word of God; and then look on for the English word "crystal" in Job, of Wisdom. "It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious *onyx*, or the sapphire: the *gold and the crystal* shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold"; in Ezekiel, "firmament of the terrible crystal," or in the Apocalypse, "A sea of glass like unto crystal,—water of life, clear as crystal,"—"light of the city like a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Your understanding the true meaning of all these passages depends on your distinct conception of the permanent clearness and hardness of the Rock-crystal.

The three substances named here in the first account of Paradise, stand generally as types—the *Gold* of all precious metals: the *Crystal* of all clear precious stones prized

for *lustre*; the *Onyx* of all opaque precious stones prized for *colour*.

Now note the importance of this grouping. The Gold, or precious metal, is significant of all that the power of the beautiful earth, gold, and of the strong earth, iron, has done for and against man. . . .

The Crystal is significant of all the power that jewels, from diamonds down through every Indian gem to the glass beads which we now make for ball-dresses, have had over the imagination and economy of men and women — from the day that Adam drank of the water of the crystal river till this hour.

The Onyx is the type of all stones arranged in bands of different colours: it means primarily, nail-stone — showing a separation like the white half-crescent at the root of the finger-nail; not without some idea of its subjection to the laws of life. Of these stones, part, which are flinty, are the material used for cameos and all manner of engraved work and *pietra dura*; but in the great idea of banded or belted stones, they include the whole range of marble, and especially alabaster, giving the name to the alabastra, or vases used especially for the containing of precious unguents, themselves more precious: so that this stone, as best representative of

all others, is chosen to be the last gift of men to Christ, as gold is their first; incense with both; at His birth, gold and frankincense; at His death, alabaster and spikenard.

The two sources of the material wealth of all nations were thus offered to the King of men in their simplicity. But their power among civilized nations has been owing to their workmanship. And if we are to ask whether the gold and the stones are to be holy, much more have we to ask if the worker in gold, and the worker in stone, are to be conceived as exercising holy function.

Now, as we ask of a stone, to know what it is, what it can do, or suffer, so of a human creature, to know what it is, we ask what it can do or suffer. So that we have two scientific questions put to us in this matter: how the stones came to be what *they* are — or the law of Crystallization: and how the jewellers came to be what they are — or the law of Inspiration.

. . . The same tradition, whatever its value, which gave us the commands we profess to obey for our moral law, implies also the necessity of inspired instruction for the proper practice of the art of jewellery; and connects the richness of the earth in gold and jewels with the pleasure of Heaven that

we should use them under its direction. The scientific mind will of course draw back in scorn from the idea of such possibility; but then, the scientific mind can neither design, itself, nor perceive the power of design, in others. And practically you will find that all noble designs in jewellery whatsoever, from the beginning of the world till now, has been either instinctive,—done, that is to say, by tutorship of nature, with the innocent felicity and security of purely animal art,—Etruscan, Irish, Indian, or Peruvian gold being interwoven with a fine and unerring grace of industry, like the touch of the bee on its cell, and of the bird on her nest,—or else, has been wrought into its finer forms, under the impulse of religion in sacred service, in crosier, chalice, and lamp: and that the best beauty of its profane service has been debased from these. And the three greatest masters of design in jewellery, the “*facile principes*” of the entire European School, are—centrally, the one who definitely worked always with appeal for inspiration—Angelico of Fésolle; and on each side of him, the two most earnest reformers of the morals of the Christian Church—Holbein and Sandro Botticelli.

I have first answered the question—how

men come to be jewellers. Next how do stones come to be jewels? It seems that by all religious, no less than all profane, teaching or tradition these substances are asserted to be precious — useful to man, and sacred to God.

There are three great laws by which they, and the metals they are to be set in, are prepared for us; and at present all these are mysteries to us.

The first, the mystery by which, “surely there is a vein for the silver and a place for the gold whence they find it” —

The second mystery is that of crystallization; by which, obeying laws no less arbitrary than those by which the bee builds her cell — the water produced by the sweet miracles of cloud and spring freezes into the hexagonal stars of the hoar-frost; — the flint, which can be melted and diffused like water, freezes also, like water, into *these* hexagonal towers of everlasting ice, and the clay, which can be dashed on the potter’s wheel as it pleaseth the potter to make it, can be frozen by the touch of Heaven into the hexagonal star of Heaven’s own colour — the sapphire.

The third mystery, the gathering of crystals themselves into ranks or bands, by which Scotch pebbles are made. . . .

THERE are no natural objects out of which more can be learned than stones. They seem to have been created especially to reward a patient observer. Nearly all other objects in Nature can be seen to some extent, without patience, and are pleasant even in being half seen. Trees, clouds and rivers are enjoyed even by the careless: but the stone under his foot has for carelessness nothing in it but stumbling: no pleasure is languidly to be had out of it, nor food, nor good of any kind: nothing but symbolism of the hard heart and the unfatherly gift. And yet, do but give it some reverence and watchfulness, and there is bread of thought in it, more than in any other lowly feature of all the landscape.

For a stone, when it is examined, will be found a mountain in miniature. The fineness of Nature's work is so great, that, in a slight block, a foot or two in diameter, she can compress as many changes of form and structure, on a small scale, as she needs for her mountains on a large one; and taking moss for forests, and grains of crystal for crags, the surface of a stone, in by far the plurality of instances, is more interesting than the surface of an ordinary hill, more fantastic in form and incomparably richer in color.

THE MOUNTAIN KINGDOM.

THE mountain kingdom of which I claim possession by the law of love. — *Præterita*, Vol. III, Chap. II, p. 412.

YOUR power of seeing mountains cannot be developed either by your vanity, your curiosity, or your love of muscular exercise. It depends on the cultivation of the instrument of sight itself, and of the soul that uses it. — *Deucalion*, Vol. I, Chap. I, p. 11.

VI.

THE MOUNTAIN KINGDOM.

THE glory of a cloud — without its wane ;
The stillness of the earth — but not its gloom ;
The loveliness of life — without its pain ;
The peace — but not the hunger of the tomb !
Ye Pyramids of God ! around whose bases
The sea foams noteless in his narrow cup ;
And the unseen movements of the earth send up
A murmur which your lulling snow effaces
Like the deer's footsteps. Thrones imperishable !
About whose adamantine steps the breath
Of dying generations vanisheth,
Less cognizable than clouds. . . .

— *Poems — The Alps* — p. 310.

THE feeding of the rivers and the purifying of the winds are the least of the services appointed to the hills. To fill the thirst of the human heart for the beauty of God's working—to startle its lethargy with the deep and pure agitation of astonishment—are their higher missions. They are as a great and noble architecture; first giving shelter, comfort, and rest; and covered also with mighty sculpture and painted legend. It is impossible to examine in their connected system the features of even the most

ordinary mountain scenery, without concluding that it has been prepared in order to unite, as far as possible, and in the closest compass, every means of delighting and sanctifying the heart of man. "As far as *possible*"; that is, as far as is consistent with the fulfilment of the sentence of condemnation on the whole earth. Death must be upon the hills; and the cruelty of the tempests smite them, and the brier and thorn spring up upon them: but they so smite, as to bring their rocks into the fairest forms; and so spring, as to make the very desert blossom as the rose. . . . Even among our own hills of Scotland and Cumberland, though often too barren to be perfectly beautiful, and always too low to be perfectly sublime, it is strange how many deep sources of delight are gathered into the compass of their glens and vales; and how, down to the most secret cluster of their far-away flowers, and the idlest leap of their straying streamlets, the whole heart of Nature seems still thirsting to give, and still to give, shedding forth her everlasting beneficence with a profusion so patient, so passionate, that our utmost observance and thankfulness are but, at last, neglect of her nobleness, and apathy to her love.

But among the true mountains of the greater orders the Divine purpose of appeal at once to all the faculties of the human spirit becomes still more manifest. Inferior hills ordinarily interrupt, in some degree, the richness of the valleys at their feet. . . .

. . . But the great mountains *lift* the lowlands *on their sides*. Let the reader imagine, first, the appearance of the most varied plain of some richly cultivated country; let him imagine it dark with graceful woods, and soft with deepest pastures; let him fill the space of it, to the utmost horizon, with innumerable and changeful incidents of scenery and life; leading pleasant streamlets through its meadows, strewing clusters of cottages beside their banks, tracing sweet footpaths through its avenues, and animating its fields with happy flocks, and slow wandering spots of cattle: and when he has wearied himself with endless imagining, and left no space without some loveliness of its own, let him conceive all this great plain, with its infinite treasures of natural beauty and happy human life, gathered up in God's hands from one edge of the horizon to the other, like a woven garment; and shaken into deep falling folds, as the robes droop from a king's shoulders; all its bright rivers

leaping into cataracts along the hollows of its fall, and all its forests rearing themselves aslant against its slopes, as a rider rears himself back when his horse plunges; and all its villages nestling themselves into the new windings of its glens; and all its pastures thrown into steep waves of green-sward, dashed with dew along the edges of their folds, and sweeping down into endless slopes, with a cloud here and there lying quietly, half on the grass, half in the air; and he will have as yet, in all this lifted world, only the foundation of one of the great Alps. And whatever is lovely in the lowland scenery becomes lovelier in this change; the trees which grew heavily and stiffly from the level line of plain assume strange curves of strength and grace as they bend themselves against the mountain side; they breathe more freely, and toss their branches more carelessly as each climbs higher, looking to the clear light above the topmost leaves of its brother tree; the flowers which on the arable plain fell before the plough, now find out for themselves unapproachable places, where year by year they gather into happier fellowship, and fear no evil: and the streams which in the level land crept in dark eddies by unwholesome

banks, now move in showers of silver, and are clothed with rainbows, and bring health and life wherever the glance of their waves can reach.

And although this beauty seems at first, in its wildness, inconsistent with the service of man, it is in fact more necessary to his happy existence than all the level and easily subdued land which he rejoices to possess.

. . . It may not be profitless to review briefly the nature of the three great offices which mountain ranges are appointed to fulfil, in order to preserve the health and increase the happiness of mankind.

Their first use is of course to *give motion to (fresh) water*. . . .

The second great use of mountains is to maintain a constant change in the currents and nature of the *air*. . . .

The third great use of mountains is to cause perpetual change in the *soils* of the earth. . . .

. . . And it is not, in reality, a degrading, but a true, large, and ennobling view of the mountain ranges of the world, if we compare them to heaps of fertile and fresh earth, laid up by a prudent gardener beside his garden beds, whence, at intervals, he casts on them some scattering of new and virgin

ground. That which we so often lament as convulsion or destruction is nothing else than the momentary shaking of the dust from the spade. . . .

I have not spoken of the local and peculiar utilities of mountains: I do not count the benefit of the supply of summer streams from the moors of the higher ranges—of the various medicinal plants which are nested among their rocks—of the delicate pasturage which they furnish for cattle—of the forests in which they bear timber for shipping—the stones they supply for building, or the ores of metal which they collect into spots open to discovery, and easy for working. All these benefits are of a secondary or a limited nature. But the three great functions—those of giving motion and change to water, air, and earth—are indispensable to human existence; they are operations to be regarded with as full a depth of gratitude as the laws which bid the tree bear fruit, or the seed multiply itself in the earth. And thus those desolate and threatening ranges of dark mountains, which, in nearly all ages of the world, men have looked upon with aversion or with terror, and shrunk back from as if they were haunted by perpetual images of death, are,

in reality, sources of life and happiness far fuller and more beneficent than all the bright fruitfulness of the plain.

The valleys only feed; the mountains feed and guard and strengthen us. We take our ideas of fearfulness and sublimity alternately from the mountains and the sea; but we associate them unjustly. The sea wave, with all its beneficence, is yet devouring and terrible, but the silent mass of the blue mountain is lifted toward heaven in a stillness of perpetual mercy; and the one surge, unfathomable in its darkness, the other, unshaken in its faithfulness, forever bear the seal of their appointed symbolism,

“Thy Justice is like the Great Mountains
Thy Judgments are a great Deep.”

— *In Montibus Sanctis*, Chap. II, pp. 130-139.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Chap. VII.

IN approaching any large mountain range, the ground over which the spectator passes, if he examine it with any intelligence, will almost always arrange itself in his mind under three great heads. There will be, first, the ground of the plains or valleys he is about to quit, composed of sand, clay, gravel, rolled stones, and variously mingled soils. . . .

As he advances yet farther into the hill district, he finds the rocks around him assuming a gloomier and more majestic condition. Their tint darkens; their outlines become wild and irregular; and whereas before they had only appeared at the roadside in narrow ledges among the turf, or glanced out from among the thickets above the brooks in white walls and fantastic towers, they now rear themselves up in solemn and shattered masses far and near; softened, indeed, with strange harmony of clouded colors, but possessing the whole scene with their iron spirit; and rising, in all probability, into eminences as much prouder in actual elevation than those of the intermediate rocks, as more powerful in their influence over every minor feature of the landscape.

And when the traveller proceeds to observe closely the materials of which these nobler ranges are composed, he finds also a complete change in their internal structure. They are no longer formed of delicate sand or dust—each particle of that dust the same as every other, and the whole mass depending for its hardness merely on their closely cemented unity; but they are now formed of several distinct substances visibly

unlike each other; and not *pressed*, but *crystallized* into one mass — crystallized into a unity far more perfect than that of the dusty limestone, but yet without the least mingling of their several natures with each other. . . .

. . . There is one lesson evidently intended to be taught by the different characters of these rocks, which we must not allow to escape us. We have to observe, first, the state of perfect powerlessness, and loss of all beauty, exhibited in those beds of earth in which the separate pieces or particles are entirely independent of each other, more especially in the gravel whose pebbles have all been *rolled into one* shape; secondly, the greater degree of permanence, power, and beauty, possessed by the rocks whose component atoms have more affection and attraction for each other, though all of one kind; and lastly, the utmost form and highest beauty of the rocks in which the several atoms have all *different shapes, characters, and offices*; but are inseparably united by some fiery or baptismal process which has purified them all. . . .

. . . All these orders of substance agree in one character, that of being more or less frangible or soluble. . . .

. . . Perfect permanence and absolute security were evidently in no wise intended. It would have been as easy for the Creator to have made mountains of steel as of granite, of adamant as of lime; but this was clearly no part of the Divine counsels; mountains were to be destructible and frail—to melt under the soft lambency of the streamlet, to shiver before the subtle wedge of the frost, to wither with untraceable decay in their own substance—and yet, under all these conditions of destruction, to be maintained in magnificent eminence before the eyes of men.

— *In Montibus Sanctis*, Chap. III, pp. 140-146.

— *Modern Painters*, Part V, the beginning of Chap. VIII.

THE higher mountains have their scenes of power and vastness, their blue precipices and cloud-like snows; why should they also have the best and fairest colors given to their foreground rocks, and overburden the human mind with wonder; while the less majestic scenery, tempting us to the observance of details for which amidst the higher mountains we had no admiration left, is yet, in the beauty of those very details, as inferior as it is in the scale of magnitude?

I believe the answer must be, simply, that

it is not good for man to live among what is most beautiful:—that he is a creature incapable of satisfaction by anything upon earth; and that to allow him habitually to possess, in any kind whatsoever, the utmost the earth can give, is the surest way to cast him into lassitude or discontent.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. XI, p. 172.

ALL mountains, in some degree, but especially those which are composed of soft or decomposing substance, are delicately and symmetrically furrowed by the descent of streams. The traces of their action commence at the very summits, fine as threads and multitudinous, like the uppermost branches of a delicate tree. They unite in groups as they descend, concentrating gradually into dark undulating ravines, into which the body of the mountain descends on each side, at first in a convex curve, but at the bottom with the same uniform slope on each side which it assumes in its final descent to the plain, unless the rock be very hard.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part II, Sect. IV, Chap. III, p. 51.

I MIGHT devote half a volume to a description of the fantastic and incomprehensible

arrangement of these rocks (slaty crystal-lines) and their veins, but all that is necessary for the general reader to know or remember, is this broad fact of the *undulation* of their whole substance. For there is something, it seems to me, inexpressibly marvellous in this phenomenon, largely looked at. It is to be remembered that these are the rocks which, on the average, will be oftenest observed by the human race. The central granites are too far removed, the lower rocks too common, to be carefully studied; these slaty crystal-lines form the noblest hills that are easily accessible, and seem to be thus calculated especially to attract observation, and reward it. Well, we begin to examine them; and first we find a notable hardness in them, and a thorough boldness of general character, which makes us regard them as very types of perfect rocks. They have nothing of the look of dried earth about them, nothing petty or limited in the display of their bulk. Where they are, they seem to form the world; no mere bank of a river here, or of a lane there, peeping out among the hedges or forests: but from the lowest valley to the highest clouds, all is theirs—one adamantine dominion and rigid authority of rock. We yield ourselves to the impression of

their eternal, unconquerable stubbornness of strength; their mass seem the least yielding, least to be softened, or in anywise dealt with by external force, of all earthly substance. And, behold, as we look farther into it, it is all touched and troubled, like waves by a summer breeze; rippled, far more delicately than seas or lakes are rippled; *they* only undulate along their surface—this rock trembles through its every fibre, like the chords of an Æolian harp—like the stillest air of spring with the echoes of a child's voice. Into the heart of all those great mountains, through every tossing of their boundless crests, and deep beneath all their unfathomable defiles, flows that strange quivering of their substance. Other and weaker things seem to express their subjection to an Infinite power only by momentary terrors; as the weeds bow down before the feverish wind, and the sound of the going in the tops of the taller trees passes on before the clouds, and the fitful opening of pale spaces on the dark water as if some invisible hand were casting dust abroad upon it, gives warning of the anger that is to come, we may well imagine that there is indeed a fear passing upon the grass, and leaves, and waters, at the presence of some great spirit

commissioned to let the tempest loose: but the terror passes, and their sweet rest is perpetually restored to the pastures and the waves. Not so to the mountains. They, which at first seemed strengthened beyond the dread of any violence or change, are yet also ordained to bear upon them the symbol of a perpetual Fear: the tremor which fades from the soft lake and gliding river is sealed, to all eternity, upon the rock; and while things that pass visibly from birth to death may sometimes forget their feebleness, the mountains are made to possess a perpetual memorial of their infancy,—that infancy which the prophet saw in his vision: “I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form, and void, and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and lo, they *trembled*, and all the hills *moved lightly*.”

Thus far may we trace the apparent typical signification of the structure of those noble rocks. The material uses of this structure are not less important. These substances of the higher mountains, it is always to be remembered, seem to be so hard as to enable them to be raised into, and remain in, the most magnificent forms.

—*Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. IX, pp. 156-158.

THE rocks which are destitute of mica, or in which the mica lies irregularly, or in which it is altogether absent, I shall call Compact Crystallines.—Under this head are embraced the large group of the granites, syenites, and porphries—rocks which all agree in . . . variety of color. . . . The method of their composition out of different substances necessitates their being all more or less spotted or dashed with various colors; there being generally a prevalent ground color, with other subordinate hues broken over it, forming for the most part, tones of silver grey, of warm, but subdued red, or purple. Now there is in this a very marvellous provision for the central ranges. Other rocks, placed lower among the hills receive color upon their surfaces from all kinds of minute vegetation: but these higher and more exposed rocks are liable to be in many parts barren; and the wild forms into which they are thrown necessitate their being often freshly broken, so as to bring their pure color, untempered in anywise, frankly into sight. Hence it is appointed that this color shall not be raw or monotonous, but composed—as all beautiful colors must be composed—by mingling of many hues in one. Not that there is any aim at

attractive beauty in these rocks; they are intended to constitute solemn and desolate scenes; and there is nothing delicately or variously disposed in their colors. Such beauty would have been inconsistent with their expression of power and terror, and it is reserved for the marble and other rocks of inferior office. But their color is grave and perfect; closely resembling in many cases, the sort of hue reached by cross-checkering in the ground of fourteenth-century manuscripts, and peculiarly calculated for distant effects of light; being for the most part, slightly warm in tone, so as to receive with full advantage the red and orange rays of sunlight. This warmth is almost always farther aided by a glowing orange color, derived from the decomposition of the iron which, though in small quantity, usually is an essential element in them: the orange hue forms itself in unequal veins and spots upon the surfaces which have been long exposed, more or less darkening them; and a very minute black lichen,—so minute as to look almost like spots of black paint—a little opposed and warmed by the golden *Lichen geographicus*, still farther subdues the paler hues of the highest granite rocks. Now, when a surface

of this kind is removed to a distance of four or five miles, and seen under warm light through soft air, the orange becomes russet, more or less inclining to pure red, according to the power of the rays; but the black of the lichens becomes pure dark blue; and the result of their combination is that peculiar reddish purple which is so strikingly the characteristic of the rocks of the higher Alps. . . . This second characteristic is a tough hardness—a grave hardness, which will bear many blows before it yields. . . .

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. VIII, p. 145.

NATURE gives us in these mountains a clear demonstration of her will. She is here driven to make fracture the law of being. She cannot tuft the rock-edges with moss, or round them by water, or hide them with leaves and roots. She is bound to produce a form admirable to human beings, by continual breaking away of substance. And behold—so soon as she is compelled to do this—she changes the law of fracture itself. “Growth,” she seems to say, “is not essential to my work, nor concealment, nor softness, but curvature is; and if I must produce my forms by breaking them, the fracture itself shall be in curves. If, instead of dew and sun-

shine, the only instruments I am to use are the lightning and the frost, then their forked tongues and crystal wedges shall still work out my laws of tender line. Devastation instead of nurture may be the task of all my elements, and age after age may only prolong the unrenovated ruin; but the appointments of typical beauty which have been made over all creatures shall not therefore be abandoned; and the rocks shall be ruled in their perpetual perishing, by the same ordinances that direct the bending of the reed and the blush of the rose."

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. XIV, p. 246.

As we pass beneath the hills which have been shaken by earthquake and torn by convulsion, we find that periods of perfect repose succeeded those of destruction. The pools of calm water lie clear beneath their fallen rocks, the water-lilies gleam, and the reeds whisper among their shadows; the village rises again over the forgotten graves, and its church-tower, white through the storm-twilight, proclaims a renewed appeal to His protection in whose hand "are all the corners of the earth, and the strength of the hills is His also." There is no loveliness of Alpine valley that does not teach the

same lesson. It is just where "the mountain falling cometh to naught and the rock is removed out of his place," that, in process of years, the fairest meadows bloom between the fragments, the clearest rivulets murmur from their crevices among the flowers, and the clustered cottages, each sheltered beneath some strength of mossy stone, now to be removed no more, and with their pastured flocks around them, safe from the eagle's stoop, and the wolf's ravin, have written upon their fronts, in simple words, the mountaineers faith in the ancient promise "Neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh." . . .

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. XVIII, p. 391.

THE best image which the world can give of Paradise is in the slope of the meadows, orchards, and corn-fields on the sides of a great Alp, with its purple rocks and eternal snows above; this excellence not being in any wise referable to feeling, or individual preferences, but demonstrable by calm enumeration of the number of lovely colors on the rocks, the varied grouping of the trees, and quantity of noble incidents in stream, crag, or cloud, presented to the eye at any given moment.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. XX, p. 427.

I DO not know any district possessing more pure or uninterrupted fulness of mountain character (and that of the highest order), or which appears to have been less disturbed by foreign agencies, than that which borders the course of the Trient between Valorsine and Martigny. The paths which lead to it out of the valley of the Rhone, rising at first in steep circles among the walnut trees, like winding stairs among the pillars of a Gothic tower, retire over the shoulders of the hills into a valley almost unknown, but thickly inhabited by an industrious and patient population. Along the ridges of the rocks, smoothed by old glaciers into long, dark, billowy swellings, like the backs of plunging dolphins, the peasant watches the slow coloring of the tufts of moss and roots of herb which, little by little, gather a feeble soil over the iron substance; then, supporting the narrow strip of clinging ground with a few stones, he subdues it to the spade; and in a year or two a little crest of corn is seen waving upon the rocky casque. The irregular meadows run in and out like inlets of lake among these harvested rocks, sweet with perpetual streamlets, that seem always to have chosen the steepest places to come down, for the sake of the leaps, scattering

their handfuls of crystal this way and that, as the wind takes them, with all the grace, but with none of the formalism, of fountains; divided into fanciful change of dash and spring, yet with the seal of their granite channels upon them, as the lightest play of human speech may bear the seal of a past toil, and closing back out of their spray to lave the rigid angles, and brighten with silver fringes and glassy films each lower and lower step of sable stone; until at last, gathered all together again,—except, perhaps, some chance drops caught on the apple-blossom, where it has budded a little nearer the cascade than it did last spring,—they find their way down to the turf, and lose themselves in that silently; with quiet depth of clear water furrowing among the grass blades, and looking only like their shadow, but presently emerging again in little startled gushes and laughing hurries, as if they had remembered suddenly that the day was too short for them to get down the hill.

Green field, and glowing rock, and glancing streamlet, all slope together in the sunshine towards the brows of the ravines, where the pines take up their own dominion of saddened shade: and with everlasting roar

in the twilight, the stronger torrents thunder down pale from the glaciers, filling all their chasms with enchanted cold, beating themselves to pieces against the great rocks that they have themselves cast down, and forcing fierce way beneath their ghastly poise.

The mountain paths stoop to these glens in forky zigzags, leading to some gray and narrow arch, all fringed under its shuddering curves with the ferns that fear the light: a cross of rough-hewn pine, iron-bound to its parapet, standing dark against the lurid fury of the foam. Far up the glen, as we pause beside the cross, the sky is seen through the openings in the pines, thin with excess of light: and in its clear consuming flame of white space, the summits of the rocky mountains are gathered into solemn crowns and circlets, all flushed in that strange, faint silence of possession by the sunshine which has in it so deep a melancholy: full of power, yet as frail as shadows, lifeless like the walls of a sepulchre, yet beautiful in tender fall of crimson folds, like the veil of some sea-spirit, that lives and dies as the foam flashes; fixed on a perpetual throne, stern against all strength, lifted above all sorrow, and yet effaced and melted utterly into the air by

that last sunbeam that has crossed to them from between the two golden clouds.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. XIX, pp. 393-395.

THE footmark of a glacier is just as easily recognizable as the trail of any well-known animal. . . .

Its universal effect is to round and soften the contours of the mountains subjected to it; so that a glacier may be considered as a vast instrument of friction, a white sand-paper, applied slowly but irresistibly to all the roughnesses of the hill which it covers. And this effect is of course greatest when the ice flows fastest, and contains more embedded stones; that is to say, greater toward the lower part of a mountain than near its summit.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. XIII, pp. 217, 218.

I SUPPOSE that my readers must be generally aware that glaciers are masses of ice in slow motion, at the rate of from ten to twenty inches a day, and that the stones which are caught between them and the rocks over which they pass, or which are embedded in the ice and dragged along by it over those rocks, are of course subjected to a crushing and grinding power altogether

unparalleled by any other force in constant action. The dust to which these stones are reduced by the friction is carried down by the streams which flow from the melting glacier, so that the water which in the morning may be pure, owing what little strength it has chiefly to the rock springs, is in the afternoon not only increased in volume, but whitened with the dissolved dust of granite, in proportion to the heat of the preceding hours of the day, and to the power and size of the glacier which feeds it.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. XII, pp. 179, 180.

OF the visible glaciers couched upon the visible Alps two great facts are very clearly ascertainable. . . . The first great fact to be recognized concerning them is that they are Fluid bodies. Sluggishly fluid, indeed, but definitely and completely so; and therefore, they do not scramble down, nor tumble down, nor crawl down, nor slip down, but *flow* down. They do not move like leeches, nor like caterpillars, nor like stones, but like, what they are made of, water.

The second fact is that last summer I was able to cross the dry bed of a glacier, which I had seen flowing two hundred feet deep, over the same spot, forty years ago. And

then I saw, what I had before suspected, that modern glaciers, like modern rivers, were not cutting their beds deeper but filling them up.— These, then, are the two facts I wish to lay distinctly before you—first that glaciers are fluent: and secondly, that they are filling up their beds, not cutting them deeper.

— *Deucalion*, Chap. III, pp. 28, 30.

SCULPTURE by streams, or by gradual weathering, is the finishing work by which Nature brings her mountain forms into the state in which she intends us generally to observe and love them. The violent convulsion or disruption by which she first raises and separates the masses, may frequently be intended to produce impressions of terror rather than of beauty: but the laws which are in constant operation on all noble and enduring scenery must assuredly be intended to produce results grateful to men.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. XVII, p. 327.

ONE of the principal charms of mountain scenery is its solitude . . . another feeling with which one is impressed during a mountain ramble is humility.

— *Poetry of Architecture*, pp. 34, 35.

It makes no difference to some men whether a natural object be large or small, whether it be strong or feeble. But loveliness of color, perfectness of form, endlessness of change, wonderfulness of structure, are precious to all undiseased human minds; and the superiority of the mountains in these things to the lowland is, I repeat, as measurable as the richness of a painted window matched with a white one, or the wealth of a museum compared with that of a simply furnished chamber. They seem to have been built for the human race, as at once their schools and cathedrals: full of treasures of illuminated manuscript for the scholar, kindly in simple lessons to the worker, quiet in pale cloisters for the thinker, glorious in holiness for the worshipper. And of these great cathedrals of the earth, with their gates of rock, pavements of cloud, choirs of stream and stone, altars of snow, and vaults of purple traversed by the continual stars,—of these,—it was written not long ago, by one of the best of the poor human race for whom they were built, wondering in himself for whom their Creator *could* have made them, and thinking to have entirely discerned the Divine intent in them—“They are inhabited by the Beasts”—

Was it then indeed thus with us, and so lately? Had mankind offered no worship in their mountain churches? Was all that granite sculpture and floral painting done by the angels in vain?

Not so. It will need no prolonged thought to convince us that in the hills the purposes of their Maker have indeed been accomplished in such measure as, through the sin or folly of men, He ever permits them to be accomplished. It may not seem, from the general language held concerning them, or from any direct traceable results, that mountains have had serious influence on human intellect: but it will not, I think, be difficult to show that their occult influence has been both constant and essential to the progress of the race. Consider, first, whether we can justly refuse to attribute to their mountain scenery some share in giving the Greeks and Italians their intellectual lead among the nations of Europe. There is not a single spot of land in either of these countries from which mountains are not discernible: almost always they form the principal feature of the scenery. . . . Nor would it be difficult to show that every great writer of either of those nations, however little definite regard he might manifest for the landscape of his country, has

been mentally formed and disciplined by it, so that even such enjoyment as Homer's of the ploughed ground and popular groves owes its intensity and delicacy to the excitement of the imagination produced without his own consciousness, by other and grander features of the scenery to which he had been accustomed from a child.

. . . Mountains have always possessed the power, first, of exciting religious enthusiasm: secondly, of purifying religious faith. These two operations are partly contrary to one another: for the faith of enthusiasm is apt to be *impure*; and the mountains, by exciting morbid conditions of the imagination, have caused in great part the legendary and romantic form of belief; on the other hand, by fostering simplicity of life and dignity of morals, they have purified by action what they falsified by imagination. But, even in their first and most dangerous influence, it is not the mountains that are to blame, but the human heart. While we mourn over the fictitious shape given to the religious visions of the anchorite, we may envy the sincerity and the depth of the emotion from which they spring; in the deep feeling, we have to acknowledge the solemn influences of the hills: but for the erring modes or

forms of thought, it is human wilfulness, sin and false teaching that are answerable. . . .

. . . And, in fact, much of the apparently harmful influence of hills on the religion of the world is nothing else than their general gift of exciting the poetical and inventive faculties, in peculiarly solemn tones of mind. Their terror leads into devotional casts of thought: their beauty and wildness prompt the invention at the same time; and where the mind is not gifted with stern reasoning powers, or protected by purity of teaching, it is sure to mingle the invention with its creed and the vision with its prayer. Strictly speaking, we ought to consider the superstitions of the hills, universally, as a form of poetry; regretting only that men have not yet learned how to distinguish poetry from well-founded faith. . . .

. . . Mark the significance of the earliest mention of mountains in the Mosaic books; at least of those in which some Divine appointment or command is stated respecting them. They are first brought before us as refuges for God's people from the two judgments of water and fire. The ark *rests* upon the "mountains of Ararat": and man, having passed through that great baptism unto death, kneels upon the earth first where it

is nearest heaven, and mingles with the mountain clouds the smoke of his sacrifice of thanksgiving. Again: from the midst of the first judgment by fire, the command of the Deity to His servant is, "Escape to the mountain." . . .

The third mention, in way of ordinance, is a far more solemn one: "Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off." "The Place," the Mountain of Myrrh, or of bitterness chosen to fulfil to all the seed of Abraham, far off and near, the inner meaning of promise regarded in that vow: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh mine help." And the fourth, is the delivery of the law on Sinai.

It seemed, then, to the monks, that the mountains were appointed by their Maker to be to man, refuges from Judgments, signs of Redemption, and altars of Sanctification and obedience; and they saw them afterwards connected, in the manner the most touching and gracious, with the death, after his task had been accomplished, of the first anointed Priest: the death in like manner, of the first inspired Lawgiver; and, lastly, with the assumption of His office by the Eternal Priest, Lawgiver, and Saviour. Observe the connection of these three

events . . . Try to realize that going forth of Aaron from the midst of the congregation. . . . Try if you cannot walk, in thought, with those two brothers, and the son, as they passed the outmost tents of Israel, and turned, while yet the dew lay round about the camp, towards the slopes of Mount Hor; talking together for the last time; as step by step, they felt the steeper rising of the rocks, and hour after hour, beneath the ascending sun, the horizon grew broader as they climbed, and all the folded hills of Idumea, one by one subdued, showed amidst their hollows in the haze of noon, the winding of that long desert journey, now at last to close. But who shall enter into the thoughts of the High Priest, as his eyes followed those paths of ancient pilgrimage; and through the silence of the arid and endless hills, stretching even to the dim peak of Sinai, the whole history of those forty years was unfolded before him, and the mystery of his own ministries revealed to him; and that other Holy of Holies, of which the mountain peaks were the altars, and the mountain clouds the veil, the firmament of his Father's dwelling, opened to him still more brighter and infinitely as he drew nearer his death: until at last, on the

shadeless summit—from him on whom sin was to be laid no more—from him, on whose heart the names of sinful nations were to press their graven fire no longer,—the brother and the son took breastplate and ephod, and left him to his rest.

There is indeed a secretness in this calm faith and deep restraint of sorrow, into which it is difficult for us to enter: but the death of Moses himself is more easily to be conceived: and had in it circumstances still more touching, as far as regards the influence of the external scene. For forty years Moses had not been alone. The care and burden of all the people, the weight of their woe and guilt, and death, had been upon him continually . . . and now, at last, the command came, "Get thee up into this mountain." The weary hands that had been so long stayed up against the enemies of Israel, might lean again upon the Shepherd's staff, and fold themselves for the Shepherd's prayer—for the Shepherd's slumber. Not strange to his feet, though forty years unknown, the roughness of the bare mountain-path, as he climbed from ledge to ledge of Abarim: not strange to his aged eyes the scattered clusters of the mountain herbage, and the broken shadows of the cliffs, indented far

across the silence of the uninhabited ravines: scenes such as those among which, with none, as now, beside him but God, he had led his flocks so often; and which he had left, how painfully! taking upon him the appointed power, to make of the fenced city a wilderness, and to fill the desert with songs of deliverance. It was not to embitter the last hours of his life that God restored to him, for a day, the beloved solitudes he had lost: and breathed the peace of the perpetual hills around him, and cast the world in which he had labored and sinned far beneath his feet, in that mist of dying blue;—all sin, all wandering, soon to be forgotten forever: the Dead Sea—a type of God's anger understood by him, of all men, most clearly, who had seen the earth open her mouth, and the sea his depth, to overwhelm the companies of those who contended with his Master—lay waveless beneath him: and beyond it, the fair hills of Judah, and the soft plains and banks of Jordan, purple in the evening light as with the blood of redemption, and fading in their distant fulness into mysteries of promise and love. There, with his unabated strength, his undimmed glance, lying down upon the utmost rocks, with angels waiting near to contend

for the spoils of his spirit, he put off his earthly armor. We do deep reverence to his companion prophet, for whom the chariot of fire came down from heaven: but was his death less noble, whom his Lord Himself buried in the vales of Moab, keeping, in the secrets of the eternal counsels, the knowledge of a sepulchre, from which he was to be called, in the fulness of time, to talk with that Lord, upon Hermon, of the death that He should accomplish at Jerusalem?

And lastly, let us turn our thoughts for a few moments to the cause of the resurrection of these two prophets. . . . Consider, therefore, the Transfiguration as it relates to the human feelings of our Lord. It was the first definite preparation for His death. He had foretold it to His disciples six days before; then takes with Him the three chosen ones into "an high mountain apart." From an exceeding high mountain, at the first taking on Him the ministry of life, He had beheld, and rejected the kingdoms of the earth, and their glory: now on a high mountain, He takes upon Him the ministry of death.

. . . The tradition is, that the Mount of Transfiguration was the summit of Tabor: but Tabor is neither a high mountain, nor

was it in any sense a mountain "*apart*"; being in those years both inhabited and fortified. All the immediately preceding ministries of Christ had been at Cesarea Philippi. There is no mention of travel southward in the six days that intervened between the warning given to His disciples, and the going up into the hill. What other hill could it be than the southward slope of that goodly mountain, Hermon;—the mount of fruitfulness, from which the springs of Jordan descended to the valleys of Israel.

Along its mighty forest avenues, until the grass grew fair with the mountain lilies, His feet dashed in the dew of Hermon, He must have gone to pray His first recorded prayer about death. . . . "And as He prayed, two men stood by Him." . . . One, from that tomb under Abarim which His own hand had sealed so long ago; the other from the rest into which he had entered without seeing corruption. There stood by Him Moses and Elias, and spake of His decease. Then, when the prayer is ended, the task accepted, first, since the star paused over Him at Bethlehem, the full glory falls upon Him from heaven, and the testimony is borne to His everlasting Sonship and power.

"Hear ye Him." If, in their remembrance of these things, and if in their endeavor to follow in the footsteps of their Master, religious men of by-gone days, closing themselves in the hill solitudes, forgot sometimes, and sometimes feared, the duties they owed to the active world, we may perhaps pardon them more easily than we ought to pardon ourselves, if we neither seek any influence for good nor submit to it unsought, in scenes to which thus all the men whose writings we receive as inspired, together with their Lord, retired whenever they had any task or trial laid upon them needing more than their usual strength of spirit. Nor, perhaps, should we have unprofitably entered into the mind of the earlier ages, if among our other thoughts, as we watch the chains of the snowy mountains rise on the horizon, we should sometimes admit the memory of the hour in which their Creator, among their solitudes, entered on His travail for the salvation of our race; and indulge the dream, that as the flaming and trembling mountains of the earth seem to be the monuments of the manifesting of His terror on Sinai,—these pure and white hills, near to the heaven, and sources of all good to the

earth, are the appointed memorials of that Light of His Mercy, that fell, snow-like, on the Mount of Transfiguration.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. XX, pp. 432-473.

ABOUT WATER.

MURMURING voices melt along the shore :
The splash of waves comes softly. . . .

Poems, p. 183 — *Salzburg I.*

THE great Rivers that move like His eternity.
— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part III, Sect. I, Chap. I, p. 222.

VII.

ABOUT WATER.

OF all inorganic substances, acting in their own proper nature, and without assistance or combination, water is the most wonderful. If we think of it as the source of all the changefulness and beauty which we have seen in clouds: then as the instrument by which the earth we have contemplated was modelled into symmetry, and its crags chiselled into grace; then as, in the form of snow, it robes the mountains it has made, with that transcendent light which we could not have conceived if we had not seen; then as it exists in the form of the torrent—in the iris which spans it, in the morning mist which rises from it, in the deep crystalline pools which mirror its hanging shore, in the broad lake and glancing river: finally, in that which is to all human minds the best emblem of unwearied, unconquerable power, the wild, various, fantastic, tameless unity of the sea; what shall we compare to this mighty, this universal element, for glory, and for beauty? or how shall we follow its eternal changefulness of feeling? It is like trying to paint a soul.

EVERY fountain and river, from the inch-deep streamlet that crosses the village lane in trembling clearness, to the massy and silent march of the everlasting multitude of waters in Amazon or Ganges, owe their play, and purity, and power, to the ordained elevations of the Earth. Gentle or steep, extended or abrupt, some determined slope of the earth's surface is of course necessary, before any wave can so much as overtake one sedge in its pilgrimage; and how seldom do we enough consider, as we walk beside the margins of our pleasant brooks, how beautiful and wonderful is that ordinance, of which every blade of grass that waves in their clear water is a perpetual sign: that the dew and rain fallen on the face of the earth shall find *no* resting-place: shall find, on the contrary, fixed channels traced for them, from the ravines of the central crests down which they roar in sudden ranks of foam, to the dark hollows beneath the banks of lowland pastures, round which they must circle slowly among the stems and beneath the leaves of the lilies: paths prepared for them, by which, at some appointed rate of journey, they must evermore descend, sometimes slow and sometimes swift, but never pausing: the daily portion of the earth they have to glide over

marked for them at each successive sunrise, the place which has known them knowing them no more, and the gateways of guarding mountains opened for them in cleft and chasm, none letting them in their pilgrimage: and, from far off, the great heart of the sea calling them to itself! Deep calleth unto deep. I know not which of the two is the more wonderful,—that calm, gradated, invisible slope of the champaign land, which gives motion to the stream: or that passage cloven for it through the ranks of hill, which, necessary for the health of the land immediately around them, would yet, unless so supernaturally divided, have fatally intercepted the flow of the waters from far-off countries. When did the great spirit of the river first knock at those adamantine gates? When did the porter open to it, and cast his keys away forever, lapped in whirling sand? I am not satisfied—no one should be satisfied—with that vague answer,—the river *cut* its way. Not so. The river *found* its way. I do not see that rivers, in their own strength, can do much in cutting their way; they are nearly as apt to choke their channels up, as to carve them out. Only give a river some little sudden power in a valley, and see how it will use it. Cut

itself a bed? Not so, by any means, but fill up its bed, and look for another, in a wild, dissatisfied, inconsistent manner. Any way, rather than the old one, will better please it; and even if it is banked up and forced to keep to the old one, it will not deepen, but do all it can to raise it, and leap out of it. And although, wherever water has a steep fall, it will swiftly cut itself a bed deep into the rock or ground, it will not, when the rock is hard, cut a wider channel than it actually needs; so that if the existing river beds, through ranges of mountain, had in reality been cut by the streams, they would be found, wherever the rocks are hard, only in the form of narrow and profound ravines — like the well-known channel of the Niagara, below the fall; not in that of extended valleys.

— *In Montibus Sanctis*, Chap. II, pp. 133, 134.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Chap. VII.

THE sources of a river are usually half lost among moss and pebbles, and its first movements doubtful in direction: but, as the current gathers force, its banks are determined, and its branches are numbered.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. VI, p. 77.

IT is strange how seldom rivers have been named from their depth. Mostly they take

at once some dear, companionable name; and become gods, or at least living creatures, to their refreshed people; if not thus Pagan-named, they are noted by their color, or their purity,—White River, Black River, Rio Verde, Aqua Dolce, Fiume di Latte; but scarcely ever, Deep River.

— *St. Mark's Rest*, Chap. III, p. 30.

ALL rivers, small or large, agree in one character, they like to lean a little on one side: they cannot bear to have their channels deepest in the middle, but will always, if they can, have one bank to sun themselves upon, and another to get cool under; one shingly shore to play over, where they may be shallow, and foolish, and childlike, and another steep shore, under which they can pause, and purify themselves, and get their strength of waves fully together for due occasion. Rivers in this way are just like wise men, who keep one side of their life for play, and another for work: and can be brilliant, and chattering, and transparent, when they are at ease, and yet take deep counsel on the other side when they set themselves to the main purpose. And rivers are just in this divided, also, like wicked and good men; the good rivers

have serviceable deep places all along their banks, that ships can sail in; but the wicked rivers go scooping by irregularly under their banks until they get full of strangling eddies, which no boat can row over without being twisted against the rocks; and pools like wells, which no one can get out of but the water-kelpie that lives at the bottom: but wicked or good, the rivers all agree in having two kinds of sides.

— *The Elements of Drawing*, Letter III, pp. 365, 366.

THE Tweed—a beautiful river, flowing broad and bright over a bed of milk-white pebbles, unless where, here and there, it darkened into a deep pool, overhung by the birches and alders which had survived the statelier growth of the primitive forests. . . . With the murmur, whisper and low fall of these streamlets, unmatched for mystery and sweetness, we must remember also the variable, but seldom wild, thrilling of the wind among the recesses of the glens. . . .

— *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. II, Letter XXXII, p. 50.

THE far away edge of . . . ocean, where the surf and the sandbank are mingled with the sky. — *Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. I, p. 8.

ON the other side of the high town (Geneva) the houses stand closer, leaving yet space for a little sycamore-shaded walk, whence one looks down on the whole southern reach of Lake, opening wide to the horizon, and edged there like the sea, but in the summer sunshine looking as *if it was the one well of blue which the sunbeams drank to make the sky of*. . . . This was the view for full noon when the Lake was brightest and bluest. . . .

. . . For all other rivers there is a surface, with an underneath, and a vaguely displeasing idea of the bottom. But the Rhone flows like one lambent jewel; its surface is nowhere, its ethereal self is everywhere, the iridescent rush and translucent strength of it blue to the shore, and radiant to the depth.

Fifteen feet thick, of not flowing, but flying water; not water, neither,—melted glacier, rather, one should call it; the force of the ice is with it, and the wreathing of the clouds, the gladness of the sky, and the continuance of Time.

Waves of clear sea, are, indeed, lovely to watch, but they are always coming or gone, never in any taken shape to be seen for a second. But here was one mighty wave

that was always itself, and every fluted swirl of it, constant as the wreathing of a shell. No wasting away of the fallen foam, no pause for gathering of power, no helpless ebb of discouraged recoil: but alike through bright day and lulling night, the never-pausing plunge, and never-fading flash, and never-hushing whisper, and, while the sun was up, the ever-answering glow of unearthly aquamarine, ultramarine, violet-blue, gentian-blue, peacock-blue, river-of-paradise blue, glass of a painted window melted in the sun, and the witch of the Alps flinging the spun tresses of it forever from her snow. The innocent way, too, in which the river used to stop to look into every little corner. Great torrents always seem angry, and great rivers too often sullen; but there is no anger, no disdain in the Rhone. It seemed as if the mountain stream was in mere bliss at recovering itself again out of the lake-sleep, and raced because it rejoiced in racing, fain yet to return and stay. There were pieces of wave that danced all day as if Perdita were looking on to learn: there were little streams that skipped like lambs and leaped like chamois, there were pools that shook the sunshine all through them, and were rippled in layers of overlaid ripples,

like crystal sand, there were currents that twisted the light into golden braids, and inlaid the threads with turquoise enamel: there were strips of stream that had certainly above the lake been mill-streams, and were looking busily for mills to turn again; there were shoots of stream that had once shot fearfully into the air, and now sprang up again laughing that they had only fallen a foot or two;—and in the midst of all the gay glittering and eddied lingering, the noble bearing by of the midmost depth, so mighty, yet so terrorless and harmless, with its swallows skimming instead of petrels, and the dear old decrepit town as safe in the embracing sweep of it, as if it were set in a brooch of sapphire.

— *Præterita*, Vol. II, Chap. V, pp. 260-263.

ALL plains capable of cultivation are deposits from some kind of water—some from swift and tremendous currents, leaving their soil in sweeping banks and furrowed ridges—others, and this is in mountain districts almost invariably the case, by slow deposit from a quiet lake in the mountain hollow, which has been gradually filled by the soil carried into it by streams, which soil is of course finally left spread at the exact level

of the surface of the former lake, as level as the quiet water itself.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part II, Sect. IV, Chap. I, p. 28.

FEW people, comparatively, have ever seen the effect on the sea of a powerful gale continued without intermission for three or four days and nights, and to those who have not, I believe it must be unimaginable, not from the mere force or size of surge, but from the complete annihilation of the limit between sea and air. The water from its prolonged agitation is beaten, not into mere creaming foam, but into masses of accumulated yeast, which hang in ropes and wreaths from wave to wave, and where one curls over to break, form a festoon like a drapery, from its edge: these are taken up by the wind, not in dissipating dust, but bodily, in writhing, hanging, coiling masses, which make the air white and thick as with snow, only the flakes are a foot or two long each: the surges themselves are full of foam in their very bodies, underneath, making them white all through, as the water is under a great cataract; and their masses, being thus half water and half air, are torn to pieces by the wind whenever they rise, and carried

away in roaring smoke, which chokes and strangles like actual water. Add to this, that when the air has been exhausted of its moisture by long rain, the spray of the sea is caught by it and covers its surface not merely with the smoke of finely divided water, but with boiling mist; imagine also the low rain-clouds brought down to the very level of the sea, as I have often seen them, whirling and flying in rags and fragments from wave to wave; and finally, conceive the surges themselves in their utmost pitch of power, velocity, vastness and madness, lifting themselves in precipices and peaks, furrowed with the whirl of ascent, through all this chaos; and you will understand that there is indeed no distinction left between the sea and air, that no object, nor horizon, nor any landmark or natural evidence of position is left: that the heaven is all spray, and the ocean all cloud, and that you can see no farther in any direction than you could see through a cataract.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part II, Sect. V, Chap. III,
pp. 159, 160.

LET the reader note that the *beryl*-colored water of the Lake of Zurich and the Limmat gave, in old days, the perfectest type

of purity, of all the Alpine streams. The deeper blue of the Reuss and Rhone grew dark at less depth, and always gave some idea of the presence of a mineral element, causing the color; while the Aar had soiled itself with clay even before reaching Berne. But the pale aquamarine crystal of the Lake of Zurich, with the fish set in it, some score of them—small and great—to a cube fathom, and the rapid fall and stainless ripple of the Limmat, through the whole of its course under the rocks of Baden to the Reuss, remained, summer and winter, of a constant, sacred, inviolable, super-natural loveliness.

— *Præterita*, Vol. III, Chap. II, p. 415.

SCOTTISH streams — I know no other waters to be compared with them;—such streams can only exist under very subtle concurrence of rock and climate. There must be much soft rain, not (habitually) tearing the hills down with floods; and the rocks must break irregularly and jaggedly.

. . . Farther, the loosely-breaking rock must contain hard pebbles, to give the level shore of white shingle through which the brown water may stray wide, in rippling threads. . . . The fords even of English

rivers have given the names to half our prettiest towns and villages:—but the pure crystal of the Scottish pebbles, giving the stream its gradations of amber to the edge, and the sound as of “ravishing division to the lute,” make the Scottish fords the happiest pieces of all one’s day walk.

—*Fors Clavigera*, Vol. II, Letter XXXII, p. 49.

LET us go down and stand by the beach—of the great irregular sea, and count whether the thunder of it is not out of time. One,—two:—here comes a well-formed wave at last, trembling a little at the top, but, on the whole, orderly. So, crash among the shingle, and up as far as this gray pebble: now stand by and watch! Another:—Ah, careless wave! Why couldn’t you have kept your crest on? it is all gone away into spray, striking up against the cliffs there—I thought as much—missed the mark by a couple of feet! Another:—How now, impatient one! couldn’t you have waited till your friends reflux was done with, instead of rolling yourself up with it in that unseemly manner? You go for nothing. A fourth, and a goodly one at last. What think we of yonder slow rise, and crystalline hollow,

without a flaw? Steady, good wave; not so fast; not so fast; where are you coming to?— By our architectural word, this is too bad; two yards over the mark, and ever so much of you in our face besides; and a wave which we had some hope of, behind there, broken all to pieces out at sea, and laying a great white table-cloth of foam all the way to the shore, as if the marine gods were to dine off it! Alas, for these unhappy arrow shots of Nature; she will never hit her mark with those unruly waves of hers, nor get one of them into the ideal shape, if we wait for a thousand years.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. XXX, p. 343.

Most people think of waves as rising and falling. But if they look at the sea carefully, they will perceive that waves do not rise and fall. They change. Change both place and form, but they do not fall; one wave goes on, and on, and still on; now lower, now higher, now tossing its mane like a horse, now building itself together like a wall, now shaking, now steady, but still the same wave, till at last it seems struck by something, and changes, one knows not how, becomes another wave.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Part IV, Chap. XII, p. 211.

THERE is a sublimity and majesty in monotony which there is not in rapid or frequent variation. This is true throughout all Nature. The greater part of the sublimity of the sea depends on its monotony.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. II, Chap. VI, p. 177.

IT is a little valley of soft turf enclosed in its narrow oval, by jutting rocks and broad flakes of nodding fern. From one side of it to the other winds, serpentine, a clear brown stream, dropping into quicker ripple as it reaches the end of the oval field, and then, first islanding a purple and white rock with an amber pool, it dashes away into a narrow fall of foam under a thicket of mountain ash and alder. The autumn sun, low but clear, shines on the scarlet ash-berries, and on the golden birch-leaves, which, fallen here and there, when the breeze has not caught them, rest quiet in the crannies of the purple rock. — *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part IX, Chap. II, p. 264.

STAND for half an hour beside the fall of Schaffhausen, or the north side where the rapids are long, and watch how the vault of water first bends, unbroken, in pure, polished velocity, over the arching rocks at the brow of the cataract, covering them with a dome

of crystal twenty feet thick — so swift that its motion is unseen except when a foam globe from above darts over it like a falling star; and how the trees are lighted above it under all their leaves, at the instant that it breaks into foam; and how all the hollows of that foam burn with green fire like so much shattering chrysoprase; and how, ever and anon, startling you with its white flash, a jet of spray leaps hissing out of the fall like a rocket, bursting in the wind and driven away in dust, filling the air with light; and how, through the curdling wreaths of the restless, crashing abyss below, the blue of the water, paled by the foam in its body, shows purer than the sky through white rain-cloud; while the shuddering iris stoops in tremulous stillness over all, fading and flushing alternately through the choking spray and shattered sunshine, hiding itself at last among the thick golden leaves which toss to and fro in sympathy with the wild water; their dripping masses lifted at intervals, like sheaves of loaded corn, by some stronger gush from the cataract, and bowed again upon the mossy rocks as its roar dies away; the dew gushing from their thick branches through drooping clusters of emerald herbage, and sparkling in white threads along the dark rocks of the shore, feeding

the lichens which chase and checker them with purple and silver.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part II, Sect. V, Chap. II, p. 121.

WHENEVER a nation is in its right mind, it always has a deep sense of divinity in the gift of rain from heaven, filling its heart with food and gladness; and all the more when that gift becomes gentle and perennial in the flowing of springs. — *Lecture on Art*, Lecture IV, p. 268.

WHEN water, not in very great body, runs in a rocky bed much interrupted by hollows, so that it can rest every now and then in a pool as it goes along, it does not acquire a continuous velocity of motion. It pauses after every leap, and curdles about, and rests a little, and then goes on again: and if in this comparatively tranquil and rational state of mind it meets with an obstacle, as a rock or stone, it parts on each side of it with a little bubbling foam, and goes around; if it comes to a step in its bed, it leaps it lightly, and then after a little plashing at the bottom, stops again to take breath. But if its bed be on a continuous slope, not much interrupted by hollows, so that it cannot rest, or if its own mass be so increased by flood that its usual resting-places are not sufficient for it, but

that it is perpetually pushed out of them by the following current, before it has had time to tranquillize itself, it of course gains velocity with every yard that it runs; the impetus got at one leap is carried to the credit of the next, until the whole stream becomes one mass of unchecked, accelerating motion. Now when water in this state comes to an obstacle, it does not part at it, but clears it like a race-horse; and when it comes to a hollow, it does not fill it up and run out leisurely at the other side, but it rushes down into it and comes up again on the other side, as a ship into the hollow of the sea. Hence the whole appearance of the bed of the stream is changed, and all the lines of the water altered in their nature. The quiet stream is a succession of leaps and pools, the leaps are light and springy, and parabolic, and make a great deal of splashing when they tumble into the pool: then we have a space of quiet curdling water, and another similar leap below. But the stream, when it has gained an impetus takes the shape of its bed, never stops, is equally deep and equally swift everywhere, goes down into every hollow, not with a leap, but with a swing, not foaming, nor splashing, but in the bending line of a strong sea-wave, and comes up again on the other side over rock and ridge, with the ease of a

bounding leopard; if it meet a rock three or four feet above the level of its bed, it will neither part nor foam, nor express any concern about the matter, but clear it in a smooth dome of water, without apparent exertion, coming down again as smoothly on the other side; the whole surface of the surge being drawn down into parallel lines by its extreme velocity, but foamless, except in places where the form of the bed opposes itself at some direct angle to such a line of fall, and causes a breaker; so that the whole river has the appearance of a deep and raging sea, with this only difference, that the torrent-waves always break backwards, and sea-waves forwards. Thus, then, in the water which has gained an impetus, we have the most exquisite arrangements of curved lines, perpetually changing from convex to concave, and *vice versa* following every swell and hollow of the bed with their modulating grace, and all in unison of motion, presenting perhaps the most beautiful series of inorganic forms which Nature can possibly produce; for the sea runs too much into similar and concave curves with sharp edges, but every motion of the torrent is united, and all its curves are modifications of beautiful life.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part II, Sect. V, Chap. III,
pp. 145, 146.

You recollect Kingsley's expression — the "crawling foam" of waves advancing on sand. Tennyson has somewhere also used with equal truth, the epithet, "climbing" of the spray of breakers against vertical rock. In either instance, the sea action is literally "rampant": and the course of a great breaker, whether in its first proud likeness to a rearing horse, or in the humble and subdued gaining of the outmost verge of its foam on the sand, or the intermediate spiral whorl which gathers into lustrous precision, like that of a polished shell, the grasping force of a giant, you have the most vivid sight and embodiment of literally rampant energy. — *Val D'Arno*, Lecture VII, p. 318.

REFLECTIONS in Water: Let us stand on the sea-shore on a cloudless night, with a full moon over the sea, and a swell on the water. Of course a long line of splendor will be seen on the waves under the moon, reaching from the horizon to our very feet. But are those waves between the moon and us *actually* more illuminated than any other part of the sea? Not one whit. The whole surface of the sea is under the same full light, but the waves between the moon and us are the only ones which are in a position to reflect

that light to our eyes. The sea on both sides of that path of light is in perfect darkness — almost black. But is it so from shadow? Not so, for there is nothing to intercept the moonlight from it; it is so from position, because it cannot reflect any of the rays which fall on it to our eyes, but reflects instead the dark vault of the night sky. Both the darkness and the light on it, therefore — and they are as violently contrasted as well may be — are nothing but reflections, the whole surface of the water being under one blaze of moonlight, entirely unshaded by any intervening object whatsoever.

Now, then, we can understand the cause of *chiaro-scuro* of the sea by daylight with lateral sun. Where the sunlight reaches the water, every ripple, wave, or swell reflects to the eye from some of its planes either the image of the sun or some portion of the neighboring bright sky. Where the cloud interposes between the sun and sea, all these luminous reflections are prevented, and the raised planes of the waves reflect only the dark under-surface of the cloud; and hence, by the multiplication of the images, spaces of light and shade are produced, which lie on the sea precisely in the position of real

or positive lights and shadows — corresponding to the outlines of the clouds — laterally cast, and therefore seen in addition to, and at the same time with, the ordinary or direct reflection, vigorously contrasted, the lights being often a blaze of gold, and the shadows a dark leaden gray; and yet, they are no more real lights, or real shadows, on the sea, than the image of a black coat is a shadow on a mirror, or the image of white paper a light upon it.

Are there, then, *no* shadows whatsoever upon the sea? Not so. My assertion is simply that there are none on clear water near the eye. I shall briefly state a few of the circumstances which give rise to real shadow in a distant effect.

Any admixture of opaque coloring matter, as of mud, chalk, or powdered granite renders water capable of distinct shadow, which is cast on the earthly and solid particles suspended in the liquid. . . .

There is, however, a peculiarity in the appearance of such shadows which require especial notice. It is not merely the transparency of water, but its polished surface, and consequent reflective power, which render it incapable of shadow. A perfectly opaque body, if its power of reflection be

perfect, receives no shadow, and therefore, in any lustrous body, the incapability of shadow is in proportion to the power of reflection. Now the power of reflection in water varies with the angle of the impinging ray, being of course greatest when that angle is least; and thus, when we look along the water at a low angle, its power of reflection maintains its incapability of shadow to a considerable extent, in spite of its containing suspended opaque matter; whereas, when we look *down* upon water from a height, as we then receive from it only rays which have fallen on it at a large angle, a great number of those rays are reflected from the surface, but penetrate beneath the surface, and are then reflected from the suspended opaque matter: thus rendering shadows clearly visible which, at a small angle, would have been altogether unperceived.

But it is not merely the presence of opaque matter which renders shadows visible on the sea, from a height. The eye, when elevated above the water, receives rays reflected from the bottom, of which, when *near* the water, it is insensible.

The actual color of the sea itself is an important cause of shadow in distant effect. . . .

. . . The sea under shade is commonly of a cold gray hue; in the sunlight it is susceptible of vivid and exquisite coloring: and thus the forms of clouds are traced on its surface, not by light and shade, but by variation of *color* by grays opposed to greens, blues to rose-tints, etc. All such phenomena are chiefly visible from a height and a distance. Local color is, however, the cause of one beautiful kind of *chiaro-scuro*, visible when we are close to the water—shadows cast, not *on* the waves, but through them, as through misty air.

—*Arrows of the Chace*, Vol. I, Miscellaneous Letter II, pp. 188, 190.

WATER, of course, owing to its transparency, possesses not a perfectly reflective surface, like that of *speculum metal*, but a surface whose reflective power is dependent on the angle at which the rays to be reflected fall. The smaller this angle, the greater are the number of rays reflected. Now, according to the number of rays reflected is the force of the image of objects above, and according to the number of rays transmitted is the perceptibility of objects below the water. Hence the visible transparency and reflective power of water are in inverse ratio. . . .

It will be found on observation that under a bank—suppose with dark trees above showing spaces of bright sky, the bright sky is reflected distinctly, and the bottom of the water is in those spaces not seen: but in the dark spaces of reflection we see the bottom of the water, and the color of that bottom and of the water itself mingles with and modifies that of the color of the trees casting the dark reflection.

This is one of the most beautiful circumstances connected with water surface, for by these means a variety of color and a grace and evanescence are introduced in the reflection otherwise impossible. . . .

. . . Water in shade is much more reflective than water in sunlight.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part II, Sect. V, Chap. I, pp. 97-99.

THERE is hardly a roadside pond or pool which has not as much landscape *in* it as above it. It is not the brown, muddy, dull thing we suppose it to be; it has a heart like ourselves, and in the bottom of that there are the boughs of the tall trees, and the blades of the shaking grass, and all manner of hues, of variable, pleasant light out of the sky; nay, the ugly gutter that stagnates over the drain bars, in the heart of the foul city,

is not altogether base; down in that, if you will look deep enough, you may see the dark serious blue of far-off sky, and the passing of pure clouds.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part II, Sect. V, Chap. I, p. 94.

COLOR STUDIES.

OF all God's gifts to the sight of man, color is the holiest, the most divine, the most solemn.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. II, Chap. V, p. 146.

VIII.

COLOR STUDIES.

THE fact is, we none of us enough appreciate the nobleness and sacredness of color: Nothing is more common than to hear it spoken of as a subordinate beauty,—nay, even as the mere source of a sensual pleasure; and we might almost believe that we were daily among men who

“ Could strip, for aught the prospect yields
To them, their verdure from the fields;
And take the radiance from the clouds
With which the sun his setting shrouds.”

But it is not so. Such expressions are used for the most part in thoughtlessness; and if the speakers would only take the pains to imagine what the world and their own existence would become, if the blue were taken from the sky, and the gold from the sunshine, and the verdure from the leaves, and the crimson from the blood which is the life of man, the flush from the cheek, the darkness from the eye, the radiance from the hair,—if they could see but for an instant, white human creatures living in a white world,—they would soon feel what they owe to color.

The fact is, that, of all God's gifts to the sight of man, color is the holiest, the most divine, the most solemn. We speak rashly of gay color and sad color, for color cannot at once be grave and gay. All good color is in some degree pensive, the loveliest is melancholy, and the purest and most thoughtful minds are those which love color the most. . . .

I know no law more severely without exception than this of the connection of pure color with profound and noble thought. . . .

Nor does it seem difficult to discern a noble reason for this universal law. In that heavenly circle which binds the statutes of color upon the front of the sky, when it became the sign of the covenant of peace, the pure hues of divided light were sanctified to the human heart for ever; nor this, it would seem, by mere arbitrary appointment, but in consequence of the fore-ordained and marvellous constitution of those hues into a seven-fold, or, more strictly still, a threefold order, typical of the Divine nature itself. Observe also the name Shem or Splendor, given to that son of Noah in whom this covenant with mankind was to be fulfilled, and see how that name was justified by every one of the Asiatic races which descended from him. Not without meaning was the love of Israel to his

chosen son expressed by the coat "of many colors"; not without deep sense of the sacredness of that symbol of purity, did the lost daughter of David tear it from her breast:—"With such robes were the king's daughters that were virgins apparelled." We know it to have been by Divine command that the Israelite, rescued from servitude, veiled the tabernacle with its rain of purple and scarlet, while the under sunshine flashed through the fall of the color from its tenons of gold; but was it less by Divine guidance that the Mede, as he struggled out of anarchy, encompassed his king with the sevenfold burning of the battlements of Ecbatana?—of which one circle was golden like the sun, and another silver like the moon; and then came the great sacred chord of color, blue, purple, and scarlet; and then a circle white like the day, and another dark, like night: so that the city rose like a great mural rainbow, a sign of peace amidst the contending of lawless races, and guarded with color and shadow, that seemed to symbolize the great order which rules over Day, and Night, and Time, the first organization of the mighty statutes,—the law of the Medes and Persians that altereth not.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. II, Chap. V, pp. 145-148.

I HAVE already, in the Stones of Venice, insisted on the sacredness of color, and its necessary connection with all pure and noble feeling:—but perhaps, I have not yet enough insisted on the simplest and readiest to hand of all proofs,—the way, namely, in which God has employed color in His creation as the unvarying accompaniment of all that is purest, most innocent and most precious: while for things precious only in material uses, or dangerous, common colors are reserved. Consider for a little while what sort of a world it would be if all flowers were gray, all leaves black, and the sky *brown*. . . . Then observe how constantly innocent things are bright in color; look at a dove's neck, and compare it with the gray back of a viper; I have often heard talk of brilliantly colored serpents: and I suppose there are such—as there are gay poisons, like the fox-glove and kalmia—types of deceit; but all the venomous serpents I have really *seen* are gray, brick-red or brown, variously mottled; and the most awful serpent I have seen, the Egyptian asp, is precisely of the color of gravel, or only a little grayer. So again, the crocodile and alligator are gray, but the innocent lizard green and beautiful. I do not mean that this rule is invariable, otherwise

it would be more convincing than the lessons of the natural universe are intended ever to be; there are beautiful colors on the leopard and tiger, and in the berries of the nightshade: and there is nothing very notable in the brilliancy of color either in sheep or cattle: . . . but take a wider view of Nature, and compare generally rainbows, sunrises, roses, violets, butterflies, birds, goldfish, rubies, opals, and corals, with alligators, hippopotami, lions, wolves, bears, swine, sharks, slugs, bones, fungi, fogs, and corrupting, stinging, destroying things in general, and you will feel then how the question stands between the colorist and chiaroscurists,—which of them have Nature and life on their side, and which have sin and death. . . .

All men, completely organized and justly tempered enjoy color: it is meant for the perpetual comfort and delight of the human heart. It is richly bestowed on the highest works of creation, and the eminent sign and seal of perfection in them; being associated with *life* in the human body, with *light* in the sky, with *purity* and hardness in the earth,—death, night, and pollution of all kinds being colorless. . . .

To color well requires real talent and earnest study, and to color perfectly is the

rarest and most precious power an artist can possess. Every other gift may be erroneously cultivated, but this will guide to all healthy, natural and forcible truth; the student may be led into folly by philosophers, and into falsehoods by purists; but he is always safe if he holds the hands of a colorist.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. III, pp. 75-80.

ALL the primary and secondary colors are capable of infinitely various degrees of intensity or depression: they pass through every degree of increasing light, to perfect light, or white: and of increasing shade, to perfect absence of light, or black. And these are essential in the harmony required by sight; so that no group of colors can be perfect that has not white in it, nor any that has not black; or else the abatement or modesty of them, in the tertiary gray. So that these three form the limiting angles of the field, or cloudy ground of the rainbow. "I do set my bow in the cloud."

And the nine colors of which you here see the essential group, have, as you know, been the messenger Iris; . . .

The names of these colors in ordinary shields of knighthood are those given oppo-

site, in the left hand column. The names given them in blazoning the shields of nobles, are those of the correspondent gems :

THE PRIMARY COLORS.

1	Or	Topaz
2	Gules	Ruby
3	Azure	Sapphire

THE SECONDARY COLORS.

4	Écarlate	Jasper
5	Vert	Emerald
6	Purple	Hyacinth

THE TERTIARY COLORS.

7	Argent	Carbuncle
8	Sable	Diamond
9	Colombin	Pearl

I. Or. Stands between the light and darkness; as the Sun, who, "rejoiceth as a strong man to run his course, between the morning and the evening. . . .

II. Gules (rose color) from the Persian word "gul," for the rose. It is the exactly central hue between the dark red, and pale red, or wild-rose. It is the color of love, the fulfilment of the joy and of the love of life upon the earth. . . . The stone of it is the Ruby.

III. Azure. The color of the blue sky in

the height of it, at noon; type of the fulfilment of all joy and love in heaven, as the rose-color, of the fulfilment of all joy and love in earth. And the stone of this is the Sapphire; and because the loves of Earth and Heaven are in truth one, the ruby and sapphire are indeed the same stone; and they are colored as if by enchantment,—how, or with what, no chemist has yet shown,—the one azure and the other rose. . . .

IV. Écarlate (scarlet). I use the French word because all other heraldic words for colours are Norman French. . . . The color meant—Carnation; *incarnation*; the color of the body of man in its beauty; of the maid's scarlet blush in noble love; of the youth's scarlet glow in noble war; the dye of the earth into which heaven has breathed its spirit:—incarnate strength—incarnate modesty. The stone of it is the Jasper, which is colored with the same iron that colors the human blood. . . .

V. Vert (viridis) from the same root as the words "virtue" and "virgin,"—the color of the green rod in budding spring; the noble life of youth, born in the *spirit*,—as the scarlet means, the life of noble youth, in *flesh*. It is seen most perfectly in clear air after the sun has set,—the blue of the upper

sky brightening down into it — and the stone of it is the Emerald. . . .

VI. Purple. The true purple of the Tabernacle, “blue, purple, and scarlet” — the kingly color, retained afterwards in all manuscripts of the Greek Gospels. . . . It is rose color darkened or saddened with blue; the color of love in noble or divine sorrow. . . . Its stone is the Jacinth, Hyacinth, or Amethyst,—“like to that sable flower inscribed with woe.”

In these six colors, then, you have the rainbow, or angelic iris, of the light and covenant of life.

VII. Argent. Silver, or snow-color; of the hoar-frost on the earth, or the star of the morning. . . .

VIII. Sable, (sable, sabulum) the color of sand of the great hour-glass of the world, outshaken. Its stone is the diamond,—never yet, so far as I know, found but in the sand. . . .

IX. Gray. (When deep, the second violet, giving Dante’s full chord of the seven colors.) The abatement of light, the abatement of the darkness, . . . the color of the turtle-dove, with the message that the waters are abated. . . . Its stone is the Pearl. . . .

PERHAPS the great monotone grey of Nature and of Time is a better color than any that the human hand can give.

— *Stones of Venice*, Vol. II, Chap. IV, p. 94.

WE have been speaking of what is constant and necessary in Nature, of the ordinary effects of daylight on ordinary colors, and we repeat, that no gorgeousness of the palette can reach even these. But it is a widely different thing when Nature herself takes a coloring fit, and does something extraordinary, something really to exhibit her power. She has a thousand ways and means of rising above herself, but incomparably the noblest manifestations of her capability of color are in these sunsets among the high clouds. I speak especially of the moment before the sun sinks, when his light turns pure rose-color, and when this light falls upon a zenith covered with countless cloud-forms of inconceivable delicacy, threads and flakes of vapor, which would in common daylight be pure snow white, and which give therefore fair field to the tone of light. There is then no limit to the multitude, and no check to the intensity of the hues assumed. The whole sky from the zenith to the horizon becomes one

molten, mantling sea of color and fire; every black bar turns into massy gold, every ripple and wave into unsullied, shadowless, crimson, and purple, and scarlet, and colors for which there are no words in language, and no ideas in the mind,—things which can only be conceived while they are visible,—the intense hollow blue of the upper sky melting through it all,—showing here deep, and pure, and lightless, there, modulated by the filmy, formless body of the transparent vapor till it is lost imperceptibly in its crimson and gold.

—*Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Part II, Sect. II, Chap. II, pp. 262, 263.

It is with interest and reverence to be noted as a physical truth that in a state of joyful and healthy excitement the eye becomes more highly sensitive to the beauty of color, and especially to the blue and red rays, while in depression and disease all colors become dim to us. — *The Art of England*, Lecture VI, p. 351.

NATURE herself produces all her loveliest colours in some kind of solid or liquid glass or crystal. The rainbow is painted on a shower of melted glass, and the colours of the opal are produced in vitreous flint mixed with water; the green and blue, and golden

or amber brown of flowing water is in its surface glossy, and in motion, 'splendidior vitro'! And the loveliest colours ever granted to human sight — those of morning and evening clouds before or after rain — are produced on minute particles of finely-divided water, or perhaps sometimes, ice. But more than this. If you examine with a lens some of the richest colours of flowers, as, for instance, those of the gentian and dianthus, you will find their texture is produced by a crystalline or sugary frost-work upon them. In the lychnis of the high Alps, the red and white have a kind of sugary bloom, as rich as it is delicate. It is indescribable: but if you can fancy very powdery and crystalline snow mixed with the softest cream, and then dashed with carmine, it may give you some idea of the look of it. There are no colours, either in the nacre of shells, or the plumes of birds and insects, which are so pure as those of clouds, opal, or flowers; but the *force* of purple and blue in some butterflies, and the methods of clouding, and strength of burnished lustre, in plumage like the peacock's, give them more universal interest; in some birds, also, as in our own kingfisher, the colour nearly reaches a floral preciousness.

The lustre in most, however, is metallic, rather than vitreous; and the vitreous always gives the purest hue. Entirely common and vulgar compared with these, yet to be noticed as completing the crystalline or vitreous system, we have the colours of gems. The green of the emerald is the best of these; but at its best is as vulgar as house-painting beside the green of birds' plumage or of clear water. No diamond shows colour so pure as a dewdrop: the ruby is like the pink of an ill-dyed and half-washed-out print, compared to the dianthus; and the carbuncle is usually quite dead unless set with a foil, and even then is not prettier than the seed of a pomegranate. The opal is, however, an exception. When pure and uncut in its native rock, it presents the most lovely colours that can be seen in the world, except those of clouds.

— *Lectures on Art*, Lecture VII, pp. 311, 312.

You see the broad blue sky every day over your heads; but you do not for that reason determine blue to be less or more beautiful than you did at first; you are unaccustomed to see stones as blue as the sapphire, but you do not for that reason think the sapphire less beautiful than other

stones. The blue color is everlastingly appointed by the Deity to be a source of delight; and whether seen perpetually over your head, or crystallised once in a thousand years into a single and incomparable stone, your acknowledgment of its beauty is equally natural, simple and instantaneous.

— *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, Lecture I, p. 228.

AN entirely perfect summer light . . . Divine beauty of western color on thyme and rose — then twilight of clearest *warm* amber far into night, of pale amber all night long; hills dark-clear against it. And so it continued, growing more intense in blue and sunlight, all day . . . and so it went glowing on . . . finally, new moon like a lime-light reflected on breeze-struck water; traces, across dark calm, of reflected hills.

— *The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 388.

A COLOR, in association with other colors, is different from the same color seen by itself. It has a distinct and peculiar power, upon the retina dependent on its associations. Consequently the color of any object is not more dependent upon the nature of the object itself, and the eye beholding it, than on the color of the objects near it.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Part II, Sect. I, Chap. V, p. 150.

A HEAVY rain-cloud raced us — and stooped over us, stealing the blue inch by inch, till it had left only a strip of amber-blue behind the Apennines, the near hills thrown into dark purple shade, the snow behind them, first blazing — the only strong light in the picture — then in shade, dark against the pure sky; the gray above, warm and lurid — a little washed with rain in parts; below, a copse of willow coming against the dark purples, nearly pure Indian yellow, a little touched with red. Then came a lovely bit of aqueduct, with coats of shattered mosaic, the hills seen through its arches, and pieces of bright green meadow mixing with the yellow of the willows.

— *Præterita*, Vol. II, Chap. III, pp. 231, 232.

THERE is not a leaf in the world which has the *same color*, visible over its whole surface; it has a white high light somewhere; and in proportion as it curves to or from that focus, the color is brighter or grayer. Pick up a common flint from the roadside, and count, if you can, its changes and hues of color. Every bit of bare ground under your feet has in it a thousand such — the gray pebbles, the warm ochre, the green of incipient vegetation, the grays and blacks of its reflexes

and shadows, might keep a painter at work for a month, if he were obliged to follow them touch for touch.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Part II, Sect. II, Chap. II, p. 271.

THE best image which the world can give of Paradise is in the slope of the meadows, orchards, and corn-fields on the sides of a great Alp, with its purple rocks and eternal snows above; this excellence not being in any wise a matter referable to feeling, or individual preference, but demonstrable by calm enumeration of the number of lovely colors on the rocks, the varied grouping of the trees, and quantity of noble incidents in stream, crag, or cloud, presented to the eye at any given moment. For consider the difference produced in the whole tone of landscape color by the introduction of purple, violet, and deep ultramarine blue, which we owe to mountains. In the ordinary lowland landscape we have the blue of the sky; the green of grass; the green of trees; and certain elements of purple, far more rich and beautiful than we generally should think, in their bark and shadows (bare hedges and thickets, or tops of trees, in subdued afternoon sunshine, are nearly perfect purple, and of an exquisite tone), as well as in ploughed

fields, and dark ground in general. But among mountains, in *addition* to all this, large unbroken spaces of pure violet and purple are introduced in their distances; and even near, by films of cloud passing over the darkness of ravines or forests, blues are produced of the most subtle tenderness; these azures and purples passing into rose-color of otherwise wholly unattainable delicacy among the upper summits, the blue of the sky being at the same time purer and deeper than in the plains. Nay, in some sense, a person who has never seen the rose-color of the rays of dawn crossing a blue mountain twelve or fifteen miles away, can hardly be said to know what *tenderness* in color means at all; *bright* tenderness he may, indeed, see in the sky or in a flower, but this grave tenderness of the far-away hill-purples he cannot conceive.

Together with this great source of pre-eminence in *mass* of color, we have to estimate the influence of the finished inlaying and enamel-work of the color-jewelry on every stone; and that of the continual variety in species of flower; most of the mountain flowers being, besides, separately lovelier than the lowland ones.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. XX, pp. 427, 429.

RESPECTING the various rocks — out of them we may obtain almost every color pleasant to human sight, not the less so for being generally a little softened or saddened. Thus we have the beautifully subdued reds, reaching tones of deep purple, in the porphyries, and of pale rose color, in the granites; every kind of silver and leaden gray, passing into purple, in the slates; deep green, and every hue of greenish gray, in the volcanic rocks and serpentines; rich orange, and golden brown in the gneiss; black in the lias limestones; and all these, together with pure white, in the marbles. One color only we hardly ever get in an exposed rock — that dull *brown* which we noticed in speaking of color generally, as the most repulsive of all hues; every approximation to it is softened by nature, when exposed to the atmosphere, into a purple gray. All this can hardly be otherwise interpreted, than as prepared for the delight and recreation of man; and I trust that the time may soon come when these beneficent and beautiful gifts of color may be rightly felt and wisely employed, and when the variegated fronts of our houses may render the term “stone-color” as little definite in the mind of the architect as that of “flower-color” would be to the horticulturist.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. XI, p. 178.

SCARLET color,—or pure red, intensified by expression of light,—is, of all the three primitive colors, that which is most distinctive. Yellow is of the nature of simple light; blue, connected with simple shade; but red is an entirely abstract color. It is red to which the color-blind are blind, as if to show us that it was not necessary merely for the service or comfort of man, but that there was a special gift or teaching in this color. Observe, farther, that it is this color which the sunbeams take in passing through the *earth's atmosphere*. The rose of dawn and sunset is the hue of the rays passing close over the earth. It is also concentrated in the blood of man.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part IX, Chap. XI, p. 399.

COLOR is, in brief terms, the type of love. Hence it is especially connected with the blossoming of the earth; and again, with its fruits; also, with the spring and fall of the leaf, and with the morning and evening of the day, in order to show the waiting of love about the birth and death of man.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part IX, Chap. XI, p. 405.

THE Greek liked purple, as a general source of enjoyment better than any other color, and

so all healthy persons who have eye for color, and are unprejudiced about it do. . . .

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Part IV, Chap. XIV, p. 280.

SOME three arrowflights further up into the wood we come to a tall tree, which is at first barren, but, after some little time, visibly opens into flowers, of a color "less than that of roses, but more than that of violets." It certainly would not be possible, in words, to come nearer to the *definition* of the exact hue which Dante meant—that of the apple-blossom. Had he employed any simple color-phrase, as a "pale pink" or "violet pink" or any such combined expression, he still could not have completely got at the delicacy of the hue; he might perhaps have indicated its kind, but not its tenderness; but by taking the rose-leaf as the type of the delicate red, and then enfeebling this with the violet gray, he gets, as closely as language can carry him, to the complete rendering of the vision, though it is evidently felt by him to be in its perfect beauty ineffable; and rightly so felt, for of all lovely things which grace the spring time in our fair temperate zone, I am not sure but this blossoming of the apple-tree is the fairest. At all events, I find it associated in my mind with four other kinds

of color, certainly principal among the gifts of the northern earth, namely:

1st. Bell gentians growing close together, mixed with lilies of the valley, on the Jura pastures.

2d. Alpine roses with dew upon them, under low rays of morning sunshine, touching the tops of the flowers.

3d. Bell heather in mass, in full light, at sunset.

4th. White narcissus (red centered) in mass, on the Vevay pastures, in sunshine after rain.

And I know not where in the group to place the wreaths of apple-blossoms in the Vevay orchards, with the far-off blue of the Lake of Geneva seen between the flowers.

—*Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Part IV, Chap. XIV, pp. 281, 282.

TREES AND THEIR MINISTRY.

IF human life be cast among trees at all, the love borne to them is a sure test of its purity.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VI, Chap. I, p. 24.

IX.

TREES AND THEIR MINISTRY.

BEING prepared for us in all ways, and made beautiful, and good for food and for building, and for instruments of our hands, this race of plants,—(trees)—deserving boundless affection and admiration from us, become in proportion to their obtaining it, a nearly perfect test of our being in right temper of mind and way of life, so that no one can be far wrong in either who loves the trees enough, and every one is assuredly wrong in both, who does not love them, if his life has brought them in his way. It is clearly possible to do without them, for the great companionship of the sea and sky are all that sailors need; and many a noble heart has been taught the best it had to learn between dark stone walls. Still if human life be cast among trees at all, the love borne to them is a sure test of its purity. . . . And sometimes I cannot but think of the trees of the earth as capable of a kind of sorrow, in that imperfect life of theirs, as they opened their innocent leaves in the warm spring-time in vain for men;—

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VI, Chap. I, pp. 24-26.

As you draw trees more and more in their various states of health and hardship, you will be every day more struck by the beauty of the types they present of the truths most essential for mankind to know, and you will see what this vegetation of the earth, which is necessary to our life, first, as purifying the air for us and then as food, and just as necessary to our joy in all places of the earth, — what these trees and leaves, I say, are meant to teach us as we contemplate them, and read or hear their lovely language, written or spoken for us, not in frightful black letters, nor in dull sentences, but in fair green and shadowy shapes of waving words, and blossomed brightness of odoriferous wit, and sweet whispers of unintrusive wisdom, and playful morality.

— *The Elements of Drawing*, Letter III, p. 380.

A VERY old forest tree is a thing subject to the same laws of nature as ourselves; it is an energetic being, liable to and approaching death; its age is written on every spray; and because we see it susceptible of life and annihilation, like our own, we imagine it must be capable of the same feelings, and possess the same faculties, and, above all others, memory: it is always telling us

about the past, never pointing to the future; we appeal to it, as to a thing which has seen and felt during a life similar to our own, though of ten times its duration, and therefore receive from it a perpetual impression of antiquity. . . . This being the case, it is evident that the chief feeling induced by woody country is one of reverence for its antiquity. There is a quiet melancholy about the decay of the patriarchal trunks, which is enhanced by the green and elastic vigour of the young saplings: the noble form of the forest aisles, and the subdued light which penetrates their entangled boughs, combine to add to the impression; and the whole character of the scene is calculated to excite conservative feeling.

— *The Poetry of Architecture*, Chap. I, p. 56.

THROUGHOUT all the freedom of her wildest foliage, Nature is resolved on expressing an encompassing limit: and marking a unity in the whole tree, caused not only by the rising of its branches from a common root, but by their joining in one work, and being bound by a common law.

— *Elements of Drawing*, Letter III, p. 377.

BUILDING PLANTS. These will *not* live on the ground, but eagerly raise edifices above it. Each works hard with solemn forethought all its life. Perishing, it leaves its work in the form which will be most useful to its successors—its own monument and their inheritance. These architectural edifices we call “Trees.” . . . In questioning the true builders as to their modes of work, I find that they are divisible into two great classes—“Builders with the shield” and “Builders with the sword.” Builders with the shield have expanded leaves, more or less resembling shields, partly in shape, but still more in office; for under their lifted shadow the young bud of the next year is kept from harm. These are the gentlest of the builders, and live in pleasant places, providing food and shelter for man. Builders with the sword, on the contrary, have sharp leaves in the shape of swords, and the young buds, instead of being as numerous as the leaves, crouching each under a leaf-shadow, are few in number, and grow fearlessly, each in the midst of a sheaf of swords. These builders live in savage places, are sternly dark in color, and though they give much health to man by their merely physical strength, they (with few exceptions) give him no food, and

imperfect shelter. Their mode of building is ruder than that of the shield-builders, and they in many ways resemble the pillar-plants of the opposite order. We call them generally "Pines." . . . The chief mystery of vegetation, so far as respects external form, is among the fair shield-builders. . . .

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VI, Chap. I, pp. 29, 31.

IF you gather in summer time an outer spray of any shield-leaved tree, you will find it consists of a slender rod, throwing out leaves, perhaps on every side, perhaps on two sides only, with usually a cluster of closer leaves at the end. . . . If you look close you will see small projecting points at the roots of the leaves. These represent buds. Whether you find them or not, they are there — visible, or latent, does not matter. Every leaf has assuredly an infant bud to take care of, laid tenderly, as in a cradle, just where the leaf-stalk forms a safe niche between it and the main stem. The child-bud is thus fondly guarded all summer; but its protecting leaf dies in the autumn; and then the boy-bud is put out to rough winter schooling, by which he is prepared for personal entrance into public life in the spring.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Chap. III, pp. 32, 33.

HAVING now some clear idea of the position of the bud, we have now to examine the forms and structure of its shield — the leaf which guards it. You will form the best general idea of the flattened leaf of shield-builders by thinking of it as you would of a mast and a sail. . . . To some extent, indeed, it has yards also, ribs branching from the innermost one ; only the yards of the leaf will not run up and down, which is one essential function of a sail-yard.

The analogy will, however, serve one step more. As the sail must be on one side of the mast, so the expansion of a leaf is on one side of its central rib, or of its system of ribs. It is laid over them as if it were stretched over a frame, so that on the upper surface it is comparatively smooth; on the lower, barred.

. . . The leaves are the feeders of the plant. Their own orderly habits of succession must not interfere with their main business of finding food. Where the sun and air are, the leaf must go, whether it be out of order or not. So, therefore, in any group, the first consideration with the young leaves is much like that of young bees, how to keep out of each other's way, that every one may at once leave its neighbors as much free-air pasture

as possible, and obtain a relative freedom for itself. This would be a quite simple matter and produce other simply balanced forms, if each branch, with open air all round it, had nothing to think of but reconciliation of interests among its own leaves. But every branch has others to meet or to cross, sharing with them, in various advantage, what shade or sun, or rain is to be had. Hence every single leaf-cluster presents the general aspect of a little family, entirely at unity among themselves, but obliged to get their living by various shifts, concessions, and infringements of the family rules, in order not to invade the privileges of other people in their neighborhood.

And in the arrangement of these concessions there is an exquisite sensibility among the leaves. They do not grow each to his own liking, till they run against one another, and then turn back sulkily; but by a watchful instinct, far apart, they anticipate their companion's courses, as ships at sea, and in every unfolding of their edged tissue, guide themselves by the sense of each other's remote presence, and by a watchful penetration of leafy purpose in the far future. So that every shadow which one casts on the next, and every glint of sun which each reflects to

the next, and every touch which in toss of storm each receives from the next, aid or arrest the development of their advancing form, and direct, as will be safest and best, the curve of every fold and the current of every vein.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VI, Chap. IV, pp. 43-57.

It is evident that the more leaves the stalk has to sustain, the more strength it requires. It might appear, therefore, not unadvisable, that every leaf should as it grew, pay a small tax to the stalk for its sustenance; so that there might be no fear of any number of leaves being too oppressive to their bearer. Which, accordingly, is just what the leaves do. Each, from the moment of his complete majority, pays a stated tax to the stalk; that is to say, collects for it a certain quantity of wood, or materials for wood, and sends this wood, or what ultimately will become wood, *down* the stalk to add to its thickness.

“Down the stalk?” Yes, and down a great way farther. For, as the leaves, if they did not thus contribute to their own support, would soon be too heavy for the spray, so if the spray, with its family of leaves, contributed nothing to the thickness of the

branch, the leaf-families would soon break down their sustaining branches. And, similarly, if the branches gave nothing to the stem, the stem would soon fall under its boughs. Therefore, as each leaf adds to the thickness of the shoot, so each shoot to the branch, so each branch to the stem, and that with so perfect an order and regularity of duty, that from every leaf in all the countless crowd at the tree's summit, one slender fibre, or at least fibre's thickness of wood, descends through shoot, through spray, through branch, and through stem; and having thus added, in its due proportion, to form the strength of the tree, labors yet farther, and more painfully to provide for its security: and thrusting forward into the root, loses nothing of its mighty energy, until, mining through the darkness, it has taken hold in cleft of rock or depth of earth, as extended as the sweep of its green crest in the free air. Such, at least, is the mechanical aspect of the tree. The work of its construction, considered as a branch tower, partly propped by buttresses, partly lashed by cables, is thus shared in by every leaf. But considering it as a living body to be nourished, it is probably an inaccurate analogy to speak of the leaves being taxed for

the enlargement of the trunk. Strictly speaking the trunk enlarges by sustaining them. For each leaf, however far removed from the ground, stands in need of nourishment derived from the ground, as well as of that which it finds in the air; and it simply sends its root down along the stem of the tree, until it reaches the ground and obtains the necessary mineral elements. The trunk has been therefore called by some botanists "a bundle of roots" but I think inaccurately. It is rather a messenger to the roots. A root, properly so called, is a fibre, spongy, or absorbent at the extremity, which secretes certain elements from the earth. The stem is by this definition, no more a cluster of roots than a cluster of leaves, but a channel of intercourse between the roots and the leaves.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VI, Chap. VI, pp. 68, 69,

So FAR as you can watch a tree, it is produced throughout by repetitions of the same process, which repetitions, however, are arbitrarily directed so as to produce one effect at one time, and another at another time. A young sapling has his branches as much as the tall tree. He does not shoot up in a long thin rod, and begin to branch when he

is ten or fifteen feet high. . . . The young sapling conducts himself with all the dignity of a tree from the first,—only he so manages his branches as to form a support for his future life, in a strong straight trunk, that will hold him well off the ground. Prudent little sapling!—but how does he manage this? how keep the young branches from rambling about, till the proper time, or on what plea dismiss them from his service if they will not help his provident purpose? So again, there is no difference in mode of construction between the trunk of a pine and its branch. But external circumstances so far interfere with the results of this repeated construction, that a stone pine rises for a hundred feet like a pillar, and then suddenly bursts into a cloud. It is the knowledge of the mode in which such change may take place which forms the true natural history of trees:—or more accurately, their moral history. An animal is born with so many limbs, and a head of such a shape. That is, strictly speaking, not its history, but one fact of its history; a fact of which no other account can be given than that it was so appointed. But a tree is born without a head. It has got to make its own head. It is born like a little family from which a great nation is to spring;

and at a certain time, under peculiar external circumstances, this nation, every individual of which remains the same in nature and temper, yet gives itself a new political constitution, and sends out branch colonies, which enforce forms of law and life entirely different from those of the parent state. This is the history of the state. It is also the history of a tree.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VI, Chap. VII, p. 82.

WHAT the elm and oak are to England, the olive is to Italy. . . . Its classical associations double its importance in Greece; and in the Holy Land the remembrances connected with it are of course more touching than can ever belong to any other tree of the field.

. . . I do not want painters to tell me any scientific facts about olive-trees. But it had been well for them to have felt and seen the olive-tree; to have loved it for Christ's sake, partly also for the helmed Wisdom's sake which was to the heathen in some sort as that nobler Wisdom which stood at God's right hand, when He founded the earth and established the heavens. To have loved it, even to the hoary dimness of its delicate foliage, subdued and faint of hue, as if the ashes of the Gethsemane agony had been cast

upon it forever; and to have traced, line by line, the gnarled writhing of its intricate branches, and the pointed fretwork of its light and narrow leaves, inlaid on the blue field of the sky, and the small rosy-white stars of its spring blossoming, and the beads of sable fruit scattered by autumn along its topmost boughs—the right, in Israel, of the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,—and more than all, the softness of the mantle, silver grey, and tender like the down on a bird's breast, with which, far away, it veils the undulation of the mountains;—

Now the main characteristics of an olive-tree are these. It has sharp and slender leaves of a greyish green, nearly grey on the under surface, and resembling, but somewhat smaller than, those of our common willow. Its fruit, when ripe, is black and lustrous; but of course so small, that unless in great quantity, it is not conspicuous upon the tree. Its trunk and branches are peculiarly fantastic in their twisting, showing their fibres at every turn; and the trunk is often hollow, and even rent into many divisions like separate stems, but the extremities are exquisitely graceful, especially in the setting out of the leaves, and the notable and characteristic effect of the tree in the distance is of a

rounded and soft mass or ball of downy foliage.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. III. Conclusion, pp. 175, 177.

It may be said to be a universal law with respect to the boughs of all trees that they incline their extremities more to the ground in proportion as they are lower on the trunk, and that the higher their point of insertion is, the more they share in the upward tendency of the trunk itself. But yet there is not a single group of boughs in any one tree which does not show exception to this rule, and present boughs lower in insertion, and yet steeper in inclination than their neighbors. Nor is this defect or deformity, but the result of the constant habit of Nature to carry variety into her very principles, and make the symmetry and beauty of her laws the more felt by the grace and accidentalism with which they are carried out. No one familiar with foliage could doubt for an instant of the necessity of giving evidence of this downward tendency in the boughs; but it would be nearly as great an offence against truth to make the law hold good with every individual branch, as not to exhibit its influence on the majority.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part II, Sect. IV, Chap. II, p. 51.

GETTING into a cart-road among some young trees, where there was nothing to see but the blue sky through thin branches I lay down on the bank by the road-side to see if I could sleep. But I couldn't, and the branches against the blue sky began to interest me. . . . Feeling gradually somewhat livelier . . . I took out my sketch-book and began to draw a little aspen tree, on the other side of the cart-road. . . . Languidly, but not idly, I began to draw it; and as I drew, the languor passed away: the beautiful lines insisted on being traced,—without weariness. More and more beautiful they became, as each rose out of the rest, and took its place in the air. With wonder increasing every instant, I saw that they “composed” themselves, by finer laws than any known of men. At last, the tree was there, and everything that I had thought before about trees, nowhere. . . . The woods, which I had only looked on as wilderness, fulfilled I then saw, in their beauty, the same laws which guided the clouds, divided the light, and balanced the wave. “He hath made everything beautiful, in his time” became for me thenceforward the interpretation of the bond between the human mind and all visible things; and I returned along the wood-road feeling that it had led me far:

—farther than ever fancy had reached, or theodolite measured.

— *Præterita*, Vol. II, Chap. IV, pp. 251, 253.

FORMS which can be no otherwise accounted for may often be explained by reference to the natural features of the country, or to anything which habit must have rendered familiar, and therefore delightful. . . . And to the force of this vital instinct we have farther to add the influence of natural scenery; and chiefly of the groups and wildernesses of the tree which is to the German mind what the olive or palm is to the Southern, the spruce fir. The eye which has once been habituated to the continual serration of the pine forest, and to the multiplication of its infinite pinnacles, is not easily offended by the repetition of similar forms, nor easily satisfied by the simplicity of flat or massive outlines. Add to the influence of the pine, that of the poplar, more especially in the valleys of France; but think of the spruce chiefly, and meditate on the difference of feeling with which the Northman would be inspired by the frost-work wreathed upon its glittering point, and the Italian by the dark green depth of sunshine on the broad table of the stone-pine (and consider by the way

whether the spruce fir be a more heavenly-minded tree than those dark canopies of the Mediterranean isles).

— *Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. XIII, p. 156.

OF the many marked adaptations of nature to the mind of man, it seems one of the most singular that trees intended especially for the adornment of the wildest mountains should be in broad outline the most formal of trees. The vine, which is to be the companion of man, is waywardly docile in its growth, falling into festoons beside his corn-fields, or roofing his garden-walls, or casting its shadow all summer upon his door. Associated always with the trimness of cultivation, it introduces all possible elements of sweet wildness. The pine, placed nearly always among scenes disordered and desolate, brings into them all possible elements of order and precision. Lowland trees may lean to this side and that, though it is but a meadow breeze that bends them, or a bank of cowslips from which their trunks lean aslope. But let storm and avalanche do their worst, and let the pine find only a ledge of vertical precipice to cling to, it will nevertheless grow straight. Thrust a rod from its last shoot down the stem; — it shall point to the centre of the earth as long as the tree lives.

Also it may be well for lowland branches to reach hither and thither for what they need, and to take all kinds of irregular shape and extension. But the pine is trained to need nothing, and to endure everything. It is resolutely whole, self-contained, deserving nothing but rightness, content with restricted completion. Tall or short, it will be straight. Small or large, it will be round. It may be permitted also to these soft lowland trees that they should make themselves gay with show of blossom, and glad with pretty charities of fruitfulness. We builders with the sword have harder work to do for man, and must do it in close-set troops. To stay the sliding of the mountain snows which would bury him: to hold in divided drops, at our sword-points the rain, which would sweep him from his treasure-fields; to nurse in shade among our brown fallen leaves the tricklings that feed the brooks in drought: to give massive shield against the winter wind, which shrieks through the bare branches of the plain:—such service must we do him steadfastly while we live. Our bodies, also, are at his service: softer than the bodies of other trees, though our toil is harder than theirs. Let him take them as pleases him, for his houses and ships. So

also it may be well for these timid lowland trees to tremble with all their leaves, to turn their paleness to the sky, if but a rush of rain passes by them: or to let fall their leaves at last, sick and sere. But we pines must live carelessly amidst the wrath of clouds. We only wave our branches to and fro when the storm pleads with us, as men toss their arms in a dream.

And finally, these weak lowland trees may struggle fondly for the last remnants of life, and send up feeble saplings again from their roots when they are cut down. But we builders with the sword perish boldly; our dying shall be perfect and solemn, as our warning; we give up our lives without reluctance and forever.

I wish the reader to fix his attention for a moment on these two great characters of the pine, its straightness and rounded perfectness: both wonderful, and in their issue lovely. I say, first, its straightness. . . . Other trees, tufting crag or hill, yield to the form and sway of the ground, clothe it, with soft compliance, are partly its subjects, partly its flatterers, partly its comforters. But the pine rises in serene resistance, self-contained: nor can I ever without awe stay long under a great Alpine cliff, far from all house or

work of men, looking up to its companies of pine, as they stand on the inaccessible juts and perilous ledges of the enormous wall, in quiet multitudes, each like the shadow of the one beside it—upright, fixed, spectral, as troops of ghosts standing on the walls of Hades, not knowing each other—dumb forever. You cannot reach them, cannot cry to them:—those trees never heard human voice: they are far above all sound but of the winds. No foot ever stirred fallen leaf of theirs. All comfortless they stand, between the two eternities of the Vacancy and the Rock; yet with such iron will, that the rock itself looks bent and shattered before them—fragile, weak, inconsistent, compared to their dark energy of delicate life, and monotony of enchanted pride: unnumbered, unconquerable.

Then note, farther, their perfectness. The impression on most people's minds must have been received more from pictures than reality, so far as I can judge:—so ragged they think the pine: whereas its chief character in health is green and full roundness. It stands compact, like one of its own cones, slightly curved on its side, finished and quaint as a carved tree in some Elizabethan garden; and instead of being wild in expression, forms

the softest of all forest scenery; for other trees show their trunks and twisting boughs; but the pine, growing either in luxuriant mass or in happy isolation, allows no branch to be seen. Summit behind summit rise its pyramidal ranges, or down to the very grass sweep the circlets of its boughs; so that there is nothing but green cone and green carpet. Nor is it only softer, but in one sense more cheerful than other foliage: for it casts only a pyramidal shadow. Lowland forest arches overhead, and chequers the ground with darkness: but the pine, growing in scattered groups, leaves the glades between emerald-bright. Its gloom is all its own: narrowing into the sky, it lets the sunshine strike down to the dew. . . .

The third character which I want you to notice in the pine is its exquisite fineness. Other trees rise against the sky in dots and knots, but this in fringes. You never see the edges of it, so subtle are they. . . . It seems as if these trees, living always among the clouds, had caught part of their glory from them: and themselves the darkest of vegetation, could yet add splendor to the sun itself. . . .

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VI, Chap. IX, pp. 114-119.

PAGAN sculptors seem to have perceived little beauty in the stems of trees ; they were little less than timber to them. . . . But with Christian knowledge came a peculiar regard for the forms of vegetation, from the root upwards. The actual representation of the entire trees required in many scripture subjects,—as in the most frequent of Old Testament subjects, the Fall:—familiarised the sculptors of bas-relief to the beauty of forms before unknown ; while the symbolical name given to Christ by the Prophets, “the Branch,” and the frequent expressions referring to this image throughout every scriptural description of conversion gave an especial interest to the Christian mind to this portion of vegetative structure.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. XX, p. 230.

THE green rod, or springing bough of a tree—the type of perfect human strength, both in the use of it in the Mosaic story, when it becomes a serpent, or strikes the rock ; or when Aaron’s bears its almonds ; and in the metaphorical expression, the “Rod out of the stem of Jesse,” and the “Man whose name is the Branch” and so on. And the essential idea of real virtue is that of a vital human strength, which instinctively, con-

stantly, and without motive, does what is right. You must train men to this by habit, as you would the branch of a tree.

— *The Ethics of the Dust*, Lecture VII, p. 90.

PLANTS AND FLOWERS
FOR
COMFORT AND DELIGHT.

LOVELY flowers growing in the open air, are the proper guides of men to the places which their Maker intended them to inhabit. — *Proserpina*, Chap. IV, p. 63.

I'm scarcely able to look at one flower because of the two on each side, in my garden just now, I want to have bees' eyes, there are so many lovely things.

X.

PLANTS AND FLOWERS.

FLOWERS, like everything else that is lovely in the visible world, are only to be seen rightly with the eyes which the God who made them gave us; and neither with microscopes nor spectacles. . . . The use of the great mechanical powers may indeed sometimes be compatible with the due exercise of our own; but the use of instruments for exaggerating the powers of sight necessarily deprives us of the best pleasures of sight. A flower is to be watched as it grows, in its association with the earth, the air, and the dew; its leaves are to be seen as they expand in sunshine; its colors, as they embroider the field, or illumine the forest. Dissect or magnify them, and all you discover or learn at last will be that oaks, roses, and daisies, are all made of fibres and bubbles; and these, again, of charcoal and water; but for all their peeping and probing, nobody knows how.

— *Præterita*, Vol. II, Chap. X, p. 348.

SOME fifty years ago the poet Goethe discovered that all the parts of plants had a

kind of common nature, and would change into each other. Now this was a true discovery, and a notable one; and you will find, that, in fact, all plants are composed of essentially two parts—the leaf and root—one loving the light, the other darkness; one liking to be clean, the other to be dirty; one liking to grow for the most part up, the other for the most part down; and each having faculties and purposes of its own. But the pure one, which loves the light, has, above all things, the purpose of being married to another leaf, and having child-leaves, and children's children of leaves, to make the earth fair forever. And when the leaves marry, they put on wedding-robcs, and are more glorious than Solomon in all his glory, and they have feasts of honey, and we call them “Flowers.”

—*Fors Clavigera*, Vol. I, Letter V, p. 62.

WHAT we especially need at present for educational purposes is to know, not the anatomy of plants, but their biography—how and where they live and die, their tempers, benevolences, malignities, distresses, and virtues. We want them drawn from their youth to their age, from bud to fruit. We ought to see the various forms of their diminished but hardy growth in cold climates,

or poor soils; and their rank or wild luxuriance, when full-fed, and warmly nursed. And all this we ought to have drawn so accurately, that we might at once compare any given part of a plant with the same part of any other, drawn on the like conditions.

— *Lectures on Art*, Lecture IV, p. 262.

YOUR garden is to enable you to obtain such knowledge of plants as you may best use in the country in which you live, by communicating it to others; and teaching them to take pleasure in the green herb, given for meat, and the coloured flower, given for joy.

— *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. II, Letter XLVI, p. 285.

“To dress it and to keep it.”

THAT, then, was to be our work. Alas! what work have we set ourselves upon instead! How have we ravaged the garden instead of kept it—feeding our war-horses with flowers, and splintering its trees into spear-shafts!

“And at the East a flaming sword.”

Is its flame quenchless? and are those gates that keep the way indeed passable no more? or is it not rather that we no more desire to enter? For what can we conceive of that first Eden which we might not yet

win back, if we chose? It was a place full of flowers, we say. Well: the flowers are always striving to grow wherever we suffer them; and the fairer, the closer. There may indeed have been a Fall of Flowers, as a Fall of Man: but assuredly creatures such as we are can now fancy nothing lovelier than roses and lilies, which would grow for us side by side, leaf overlapping leaf, till the Earth was white and red with them, if we cared to have it so.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VI, Chap. I, p. 21.

ROME, Whit Monday.

ON the quiet road leading from under the Palatine to the little church of St. Nereo and Achilleo, I met, yesterday morning, group after group of happy peasants . . . in Whit-Sunday dress . . . and the women all with bright artificial roses in their hair. . . . And the thing that struck me most in the look of it was not so much the cheerfulness, as the dignity;—in a true sense, the *becomingness* and decorousness of the ornament. Among the ruins of the dead city, and the worse desolation of the work of its modern rebuilders, here was one element at least of honour and order;—and, in these, of delight.

And these are the real significances of the flower itself. It is the utmost purification of the plant, and the utmost discipline. Where its tissue is blanched fairest, dyed purest, set in strictest rank, appointed to most chosen office, there — and created by the fact of this purity and function — is the flower.

But created, observe, by the purity and order, more than by the function. The flower exists for its own sake — not for the fruit's sake. The production of the fruit is an added honour to it — is a granted consolation to us for its death. But the flower is the end of the seed, — not the seed of the flower. You are fond of cherries, perhaps; and think that the use of cherry blossom is to produce cherries. Not at all. The use of cherries is to produce cherry blossoms; just as the use of bulbs is to produce hyacinths, — not of hyacinths to produce bulbs. Nay, that the flower can multiply by bulb, or root, or slip, as well as by seed, may show you at once how immaterial the seed-forming function is to the flower's existence. A flower is to the vegetable substance what a crystal is to the mineral. "Dust of sapphire," writes my friend Dr. John Brown to me, of the wood hyacinths of Scotland in the spring. Yes, that is so, — each bud more

beautiful, itself, than perfectest jewel — *this*, indeed, jewel “of purest ray serene”; but, observe you, the glory is in the purity, the serenity, the radiance,—not in the mere continuance of the creature.

It is because of its beauty that its continuance is worth Heaven’s while. The glory of it is in being, not in begetting; and in the spirit and substance,—not the change. . . .

Fasten well in your mind, then, the conception of order and purity, as the essence of the flower’s being, no less than of the crystal’s. A ruby is not made bright to scatter round it child-rubies; nor a flower, but in collateral and added honour, to give birth to other flowers. Two main facts, then, you have to study in every flower; the symmetry and order of it, and the perfection of its substance; first the manner in which the leaves are placed for beauty of form; then the spinning and weaving and blanching of their tissue, for the reception of purest colour, or refining to richest surface.

First, the order, the proportion, and answering to each other, of the parts; for the study of which it becomes necessary to know what its parts are; and that a flower consists essentially of — Well, I really don’t know what it consists essentially of. For

some flowers have bracts, and stalks, and toruses, and calices, and corollas, and discs, and stamens, and pistils, and ever so many odds and ends of things besides, of no use at all, seemingly; and others have no bracts, and no stalks, and no toruses, and no calices, and no corollas, and nothing recognizable for stamens or pistils,—only when they come to be reduced to this kind of poverty one doesn't call them flowers; they get together in knots, and one calls them catkins, or the like, or forgets their existence altogether. . . .

And for farther embarrassment, a flower not only is without essential consistence of a given number of parts, but it rarely consists, alone, of *itself*. One talks of a hyacinth as of a flower; but a hyacinth is any number of flowers. One does not talk of "a heather"; when one says "heath," one means the whole plant, not the blossom,—because heath-bells, though they grow together for company's sake, do so in a voluntary sort of way, and are not fixed in their places; and yet, they depend on each other for effect, as much as a bunch of grapes.

— *Proserpina*, Vol. I, Chap. IV, pp. 48-50.

PERHAPS few people have ever asked themselves why they admire a rose so much more

than all other flowers. If they consider, they will find, first that red is, in a delicately gradated state, the loveliest of all pure colors: and secondly, that in the rose there is *no shadow*, except what is composed of color. — *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. IV, p. 69.

You may at least earnestly believe, that the presence of the spirit which culminates in your own life, shows itself in dawning wherever the dust of the earth begins to assume any orderly and lovely state. . . . Take the nearest, most easily examined instance—the life of a flower. Notice what a different degree and kind of life there is in the calyx and the corolla. The calyx is nothing but the swaddling clothes of the flower; the child-blossom is bound up in it, hand and foot; guarded in it, restrained by it, till the time of birth. The shell is hardly more subordinate to the germ in the egg, than the calyx to the blossom. It bursts at last; but it never lives as the corolla does. It may fall at the moment its task is fulfilled, as in the poppy; or wither gradually, as in the buttercup; or persist in a ligneous apathy, after the flower is dead, as in the rose; or harmonise itself so as to share in the aspect of the real flower, as in the lily;

but it never shares in the corolla's bright passion of life.

— *The Ethics of the Dust*, Lecture X, p. 130.

THE first joy of the year—its snowdrops, the second, and cardinal one . . . the almond blossom.

— *Præterita*, Vol. I, Chap. I, p. 44.

A CHILD'S division of plants is into "trees and flowers." If, however, we were to take him in spring, after he had gathered his lap full of daisies, from the lawn into the orchard, and ask him how he would call those wreaths of richer floret, whose frail petals tossed their foam of promise between him and the sky, he would at once see the need of some intermediate name, and call them, perhaps, "tree-flowers." If, then, we took him to a birch-wood, and showed him that catkins were flowers, as well as cherry-blossoms, he might, with a little help, reach so far as to divide all flowers into two classes; one, those that grew on ground; and another, those that grew on trees. The botanist might smile at such a division; but an artist would not. To him, as the child, there is something specific and distinctive in those rough trunks that carry the higher flowers. To him it makes the main difference between one plant and an-

other, whether it is to tell as a light upon the ground, or as a shade upon the sky. . . . Plants are, indeed, broadly referable to two great classes. The first we may, perhaps, not inexpediently call Tented Plants. They live in encampments, on the ground, as lilies; or on surfaces of rock, or stems of other plants, as lichens and mosses. They live — some for a year, some for many years, some for myriads of years: but, perishing they pass on as the tented Arab passes; they leave *no memorials of themselves*, except the seed, or bulb, or root, which is to perpetuate the race.

The other great class of plants we may perhaps best call Building Plants. These will *not* live on the ground, but eagerly raise edifices above it. Each works hard with solemn forethought all its life. Perishing, it leaves its work in the form which will be most useful to its successors — its own monument, and their inheritance. These architectural edifices we call “Trees.”

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VI, Chap. II, p. 29.

THE flowering part of a plant shoots out or up, in some given direction, until, at a stated period, it opens or branches into perfect form by a law just as fixed, and just

as inexplicable, as that which numbers the joints of an animal's skeleton, and puts the head on its right joint. In many forms of flowers—fox-glove, aloe, hemlock, or blossom of maize—the structure of the flowering part so far assimilates itself to that of a tree, that we not unnaturally think of a tree only as a large flower, or large remnant of flower, run to seed.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VI, Chap. VII, p. 81.

WITHOUT entering at all into the history of its fruitage, the life and death of the blossom *itself* is always an eventful romance, . . . The grouping given to the various states of form between bud and flower is always the most important part of the design of the plant; and in the modes of its death are some of the most touching lessons, or symbolisms, connected with its existence. The utter loss and far scattered ruin of the cistus and wild rose,—the dishonoured and dark contortions of the convolvulus,—and the pale wasting of the crimson heath of Apennine, are strangely opposed by the quiet closing of the brown bells of the ling, each making of themselves a little cross as they die; and so enduring into the days of winter.

This grouping, then, and way of treating

each other in their gathered company, is the first and most subtle condition of form in flowers: and observe — I don't mean, the appointed and disciplined grouping, but the wayward and accidental.

— *Proserpina*, Vol. I, Chap. IX, pp. 51, 52.

NOTE, for a little bye piece of botany that in Val D'Arno lilies grow among the corn instead of poppies. The purple gladiolus glows through all its green fields in early spring.

— *Val D'Arno*, Lecture VI, p. 324.

THE families of all the beautiful flowers prepared for the direct service and delight of man are constructed on these two primary schemes,—the rose representing the cinq-fold radiation, and the lily the sixfold; while the fourfold, or cruciform, are on the whole restricted to more servile utility. One plant only, that I know of, in the Rose family,—the tormentilla — subdues itself to the cruciform type with a grace in its simplicity which makes it, in mountain pastures, the fitting companion of the heathbell and thyme.

— *The Laws of Fésolé*, Chap. V, p. 49.

WITH a little steady application, I suppose we might soon know more than we do now

about the colors of flowers. . . . Perhaps also in due time we may give some account of that true gold (the only gold of intrinsic value) which gilds buttercups; and understand how the spots are laid, in painting a pansy.—*Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part IV, Chap. X, p. 125.

I HAVE in my hand a small red poppy which I gathered on Whit Sunday on the palace of the Cæsars. It is an intensely simple, intensely floral, flower. All silk and flame: a scarlet cup, perfect-edged all round, seen among the wild grass far away, like a burning coal fallen from Heaven's altars. You cannot have a more complete, a more stainless, type of flower absolute; inside and outside *all* flower. No sparing of colour anywhere—no outside coarseness—no interior secrecies: open as the sunshine that creates it; fine-finished on both sides, down to the extremest point of insertion on its narrow stalk. . . .

A pure *cup* . . . that much at least you cannot but remember, of poppy-form among the corn-field: and it is best, in beginning, to think of every flower as essentially a cup. There are flat ones, but you will find that most of these are really groups of flowers, not single blossoms; and there are out-of-the-

way and quaint ones, very difficult to define as of any shape; but even these have a cup to begin with, deep down in them. You had better take the idea of a cup or vase, as the first, simplest, and most general form of true flower. The botanists call it a corolla, which means a garland, or a kind of crown.

— *Proserpina*, Vol. I, Chap. IV, pp. 52, 53.

WE usually think of the poppy as a coarse flower; but it is the most transparent and delicate of all the blossoms of the field. The rest—nearly all of them—depend on the *texture* of their surfaces for colour. But the poppy is painted *glass*; it never glows so brightly as when the sun shines through it. Wherever it is seen—against the light or with the light—always, it is a flame, and warms the wind like a blown ruby.

— *Proserpina*, Vol. I, Chap. IV, p. 56.

OF the outward seemings and expressions of plants, there are few but are in some way good and therefore beautiful, as of humility, and modesty, and love of places and things, in the reaching out of their arms, and clasping of their tendrils; and energy of resistance, and patience of suffering, and beneficence one towards another in shade and protection.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part III, Sect. I, Chap. XII, p. 336.

FLOWERS in a London ball-room are a luxury: in a botanical garden, a delight of the intellect; and in their native fields both.

— *A Joy Forever*, Addenda, 245.

I BELIEVE that there is often something in the spring which weakens one by its very tenderness; the violets in the wood send one home sorrowful that one isn't worthy to see them, or else that one isn't one of them.

The oleanders are coming out . . . and golden corn like Etruscan jewelry over all the fields.

It is one of my pet discoveries that Homer means the blue iris by the word translated "violet."

The *Lychnis*;—it is the kind of flower that gives me pleasure and health and memory and hope!

— *Hortus Inclusus*, Miscellaneous, pp. 65-68.

FLOWERS seem intended for the solace of ordinary humanity; children love them; quiet, tender, contented ordinary people love them as they grow; luxurious and disorderly people rejoice in them gathered. They are the cottager's treasure; and in the crowded town, mark, as with a little broken fragment of rainbow, the windows of the workers in

whose heart rests the covenant of peace. Passionate or religious minds contemplate them with fond, feverish intensity; the affection is seen severely calm in the works of many old religious painters, and mixed with more open and true country sentiment in those of our own pre-Raphaelites. To the child and the girl, the peasant and the manufacturing operative, to the grisette and the nun, the lover and monk, they are precious always. But to the men of supreme power and thoughtfulness, precious only at times; symbolically and pathetically often to the poets, but rarely for their own sake.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VI, Chap. X, p. 129.

I DON'T know any more tiresome flower in the borders than your especially "modest" snowdrop; which one always has to stoop down and take all sorts of tiresome trouble with, and nearly break its poor little head off, before you can see it; and then, half of it is not worth seeing. Girls should be like daisies; nice and white, with an edge of red, if you look close, making the ground bright wherever they are.

— *The Ethics of the Dust*, Chap. VII, p. 84.

THE Spirit in the plant,—that is to say, its power of gathering dead matter out of the

wreck round it, and shaping it into its own chosen shape,—is of course strongest at the moment of its flowering, for it then not only gathers, but forms, with the greatest energy.

And where this Life is in it at full power, its form becomes invested with aspects that are chiefly delightful to our own human passions; namely, first, with the loveliest outlines of shape; and, secondly, with the most brilliant phases of the primary colours, blue, yellow, and red or white, the unison of all; and, to make it all more strange, this time of peculiar and perfect glory is associated with relations of the plants or blossoms to each other, correspondent to the joy of love in human creatures, and having the same object in the continuance of the race. . . .

The main fact, then, about a flower is that it is the part of the plant's form developed at the moment of its intensest life: and this inner rapture is usually marked externally for us by the flush of one or more of the primary colours. What the character of the flower shall be, depends entirely upon the portion of the plant into which this rapture of spirit has been put. Sometimes the life is put into its outer sheath, and then the

outer sheath becomes white and pure, and full of strength and grace; sometimes the life is put into the common leaves, just under the blossom, and they become scarlet or purple; sometimes the life is put into the stalks of the flower, and they flush blue; sometimes into its outer enclosure or calyx; mostly into its inner cup; but, in all cases, the presence of the strongest life is asserted by characters in which the human sight takes pleasure, and which seem prepared with distinct reference to us, or rather, bear, in being delightful, evidence of having been produced by the power of the same spirit as our own. — *The Queen of the Air*, II, pp. 281, 282.

A SNOWDROP was to me, as to Wordsworth, part of the Sermon on the Mount.

— *Præterita*, Vol. I, Chap. XVI, p. 183.

“WHAT is a weed?” — “A plant in the wrong place.”

It is entirely true that a weed is a plant that has got into a wrong place. . . . But some plants never *do*!

Who ever saw a wood anemone or a heath blossom in the wrong place? Who ever saw a nettle or hemlock in a right one? And yet, the difference between flower and weed

certainly does not consist merely in the flower being innocent, and the weed stinging and venomous. We do not call the nightshade a weed in our hedges, nor the scarlet agaric in our woods. But we do the corncockle in our fields. . . .

. . . What is it, then, this temper in some plants — malicious as it seems — intrusive, at all events, or erring, which brings them out of their places — thrusts them where they thwart us and offend? Primarily, it is mere hardihood and coarseness of make. A plant that can live anywhere, will often live where it is not wanted. But the delicate and tender ones keep at home. You have no trouble in “keeping down” the spring gentian. It rejoices in its own Alpine home, and makes the earth as like heaven as it can, but yields as softly as the air, if you want it to give place.

But a plant may be hardy, and coarse of make, and able to live anywhere, and yet be no weed. Nevertheless, mere coarseness of structure, indiscriminate hardihood, is at least a point of some unworthiness in a plant. That it should have no choice of home, no love of native land, is ungentle; much more if such discrimination as it has, be immodest, and incline it, seemingly, to open on much-

traversed places, where it may be continually seen of strangers.

The tormentilla gleams in showers along the mountain turf; her delicate crosslets are separate, though constellate, as the rubied daisy. But the king-cup — (blessings be upon it always no less) — crowds itself sometimes into too burnished flame of inevitable gold. I don't know if there was anything in the darkness of this last spring to make it brighter in resistance; but I never saw any space of full warm yellow, in natural colour, so intense as the meadows; . . . nor did I know perfectly what purple and gold meant, till I saw a field of park land embroidered a foot deep with king-cup and clover.

— *Proserpina*, Vol. I, Chap. VI, pp. 77, 80.

On fine days when the grass was dry I used to lie down on it, and draw the blades as they grew, with the ground herbage of buttercups or hawkweed mixed among them, until every square foot of meadow or mossy bank, became an infinite picture and possession to me, and the grace and adjustment to each other of growing leaves, a subject of more curious interest to me than the composition of any painter's masterpiece.

— *Præterita*, Vol. II, Chap. X, p. 348.

EVERY kind of knowledge may be sought from ignoble motives, and for ignoble ends; and in those who so possess it, it is ignoble knowledge; while the very same knowledge is in another mind an attainment of the highest dignity, and conveying the greatest blessing. This is the difference between the mere botanist's knowledge of plants and the great poet's or painter's knowledge of them. The one notes their distinctions for the sake of swelling his herbarium, the other, that he may render them vehicles of expression and emotion. The one counts the stamens, and affixes a name, and is content; the other observes every character of the plant's color and form; considering each of its attributes as an element of expression, he seizes on its lines of grace or energy, rigidity or repose; notes the feebleness or the vigor, the serenity or tremulousness of its hues; observes its local habits, its love or fear of peculiar places, its nourishment or destruction by particular influences; he associates it in his mind with all the features of the situation it inhabits, and the ministering agencies necessary to its support. Thenceforward the flower is to him a living creature, with histories written on its leaves, and passions breathing in its motion. Its occurrence in his picture is no

mere point of color, no meaningless spark of light. It is a voice rising from the earth, — a new chord of the mind's music.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. I, Preface, pp. 37, 38.

THOUGH I would fain hold, if I might, "the faith that every flower enjoys the air it breathes," neither do I ever crush or gather one without some pain, yet our feeling for them has in it more of sympathy than of actual love, as receiving from them in delight far more than we can give; for love, I think chiefly grows in giving, at least its essence is the desire of doing good, or giving happiness, and we cannot feel the desire of that of which we cannot conceive, so that if we conceive not of a plant as capable of pleasure, we cannot desire to give it pleasure, that is, we cannot love it in the entire sense of the term. Nevertheless, the sympathy of very lofty and sensitive minds usually reaches so far as to the conception of life in the plant, and so to love, as with Shelley, of the sensitive plant, and Shakespeare always, as he has taught us in the sweet voices of Ophelia and Perdita, and Wordsworth always, as of the daffodils, and the celandine.

"It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold,
This neither is its courage nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old,"—

and so all other great poets (that is to say, great seers;) nor do I believe that any mind, however rude, is without some slight perception or acknowledgment of joyfulness in breathless things, as most certainly there are none but feel instinctive delight in the appearance of such enjoyment.

For it is a matter of easy demonstration, that setting the characters of typical beauty aside, the pleasure afforded by every organic form is in proportion to its appearance of healthy vital energy; as in a rose-bush, setting aside all considerations of gradated flushing of color and fair folding of line, which it shares with the cloud or the snow-wreath, we find in and through all this, certain signs pleasant and acceptable as signs of life and enjoyment in the particular individual plant itself. Every leaf and stalk is seen to have a function, to be constantly exercising that function, and as it seems *solely* for the good and enjoyment of the plant. It is true that reflection will show us that the plant is not living for itself alone, that its life is one of benefaction, that it gives as well as receives, but no sense of this whatsoever mingles with our perception of physical beauty in its forms. Those forms which appear to be necessary to its health,

the symmetry of its leaflets, the smoothness of its stalks, the vivid green of its shoots, are looked upon by us as signs of the plant's own happiness and perfection: they are useless to us except as they give us pleasure in our sympathizing with that of the plant, and if we see a leaf withered or shrunk or worm-eaten, we say it is ugly, and feel it to be most painful, not because it hurts *us*, but because it seems to hurt the plant, and conveys to us an idea of pain and disease and failure of life in *it*.

—*Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part III, Sect. I, Chap. I, pp. 326, 327.

THE leaves of the herbage at our feet take all kind of strange shapes, as if to invite us to examine them. Star-shaped, heart-shaped, spear-shaped, arrow-shaped, fretted, fringed, cleft, furrowed, serrated, sinuated; in whorls, in tufts, in spires, in wreaths, endlessly expressive, deceptive, fantastic, never the same from footstalk to blossom; they seem perpetually to tempt our watchfulness, and take delight in outstripping our wonder.

—*Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VI, Chap. VIII, p. 130.

WOOD hyacinths—flakes of blue fire—
The wood hyacinth is the best representative of the tribe of flowers which the Gauls called "Asphodel." —*Fors Clavigera*, Vol. I, Letter VI, p. 76.

COMPARE Milton's flowers in *Lycidas* with *Perdita's*. In *Milton* it happens, I think, generally, in the case before us most certainly, that the imagination is mixed and broken with fancy, and so the strength of the imagery is part of iron and part of clay.

Bring the rathe primrose, that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet —
The glowing violet,
The musk rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan, that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears.

Then hear *Perdita*: —

O *Proserpina*

For the flowers now, that frighted thou let'st fall
From *Dis's* wagon. Daffodils
That come before the swallow dares — and take
The winds of March with beauty. Violets, dim,
But sweeter than the lids of *Juno's* eyes
Or *Cytherea's* breath; pale primroses
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright *Phœbus* in his strength, a malady
Most incident to maids.

Observe how the imagination in these last lines goes into the very inmost soul of every flower, after having touched them all at first with that heavenly timidity, the shadow of *Proserpine's*; and gilded them with celestial gathering, and never stops on their spots,

or their bodily shape, while Milton sticks in the stains upon them, and puts us off with that unhappy freak of jet in the very flower that without this bit of paper-staining would have been the most precious to us of all. "There is pansies, that's for thoughts."

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part III, Sect. II, Chap. III, p. 418.

Just as distinctly as the daisy and buttercup are *meadow* flowers, the violet is a *bank* flower, and would fain grow always on a steep slope, towards the sun. And it is so poised on its stem that it shows, when growing on a slope, the full space and opening of its flower,—not at all, in any strain of modesty, hiding *itself*, though it may easily be, by grass or mossy stone, "half hidden,"—but to the full showing itself, and intending to be lovely and luminous, as fragrant, to the uttermost of its soft power. . . .

The native color of the violet *is* violet; and the white and yellow kinds, though pretty in their place and way, are not to be thought of in generally meditating the flower's quality or power. A white violet is to black ones what a black man is to white ones; and the yellow varieties are, I believe, properly pansies,—but the true violet which I have just now called "black"

with gerarde, "the blacke or purple violet have a great prerogative above others" and all the nobler species of the pansy itself are of full purple, inclining, however, in the ordinary wild violet to blue.

. . . The reader must remember that he cannot know what violet colour really is, unless he watch the flower in its *early* growth. It becomes dim in age, and dark when it is gathered — at least when it is tied in bunches; — but I am under the impression that the colour actually deadens also, — at all events, no other single flower of the same quiet colour lights up the ground near it as a violet will. The bright hounds-tongue looks merely like a spot of bright paint; but a young violet glows like painted glass.

— *Proserpina*, Vol. II, Chap. I, pp. 166-170.

THE vervain is the ancient flower sacred to domestic purity and cheerful service. . . . The dianthus means, translating that Greek name — "Flower of God" — and it is of all the wild flowers in Greece the brightest and richest in its divine beauty.

— *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. III, Letter LXXIV, p. 379.

QUEEN VIOLET, Sweet Violet.—I believe it is the earliest of its race, sometimes called

“Martia,” March Violet. . . . It is the queen not only of the violet tribe, but of all low-growing flowers, in sweetness of scent — variously applicable and serviceable in domestic economy — the scent of the lily of the valley seems less capable of preservation or use. . . .

Ophelia’s Pansy — The wild heart’s-ease of Europe: its proper color an exquisitely clear purple in the upper petals, gradated into deep blue in the lower ones: the centre, gold. Not larger than a violet, but perfectly formed, and firmly set in all its petals. . . . Quite one of the most lovely things that Heaven has made. . . .

. . . The old English names of Violets are many — “Love in Idleness” — making Lysander, as Titania, much wandering in mind and for a time mere “kits run the street” (or run the wood?) “Call me to you” — with “Herb Trinity” from its three colors purple, blue and gold, variously blended in different countries? “Three faces under a hood” describes the English variety only. Said to be the ancestress of all the florists pansies. . . .

. . . My *Viola aurea* is the Rock-violet of the Alps: one of the bravest, brightest, and dearest of little flowers. . . .

. . . What the colors of flowers, or of birds,

or of precious stones, or of the sea and air, and the blue mountains, and the evening and the morning, and the clouds of Heaven were given for — they only know who can see them and can feel, and who pray that the sight and the love of them may be prolonged, where cheeks will not fade, nor sunset die.

And now, to close, let me give you some fuller account of the reasons for the naming of the order to which the violet belongs, "Cytherides."

You see that the Uranides are, as far as I could so gather them, of the pure blue of the sky: but the Cytherides of altered blue: — the first, *Viola*, typically purple; the second, *Veronica*, pale blue with a peculiar light; the third, *Giulietta*, deep blue, passing strangely into a subdued green before and after the full life of the flower.

All these three flowers have great strangenesses in them and weaknesses; the *Veronica* most wonderful in its connection with the poisonous tribe of the foxgloves; the *Giulietta*, alone among flowers in the action of the shielding leaves; and the *Viola*, grotesque and inexplicable in its hidden structure, but the most sacred of all flowers to earthly and daily Love, both in its scent and glow.

Now, therefore, let us look completely for the meaning of the two leading lines,—

Sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cytherea's breath. . . .

I may refer my readers to the first chapter of the "Queen of the Air" for the explanation of the way in which all great myths are founded, partly on physical, partly on moral fact,—so that it is not possible for persons who neither know the aspect of nature nor the constitution of the human soul, to understand a word of them.

Naming the Greek Gods, therefore, you have first to think of the physical power they represent. When Horace calls Vulcan, "Avidus," he thinks of him as the power of "Fire"; when he speaks of Jupiter's red right hand, he thinks of him as the power of rain with lightning; and when Homer speaks of Juno's dark eyes, you have to remember that she is the softer form of the rain power, and to think of the fringes of the rain cloud across the light of the horizon. Gradually the idea becomes personal and human in the "Dove's eyes within thy locks," and "Dove's eyes by the rivers of water" of the Song of Solomon.

"Or Cytherea's breath," — the two thoughts of softest glance, and softest kiss, being thus

together associated with the flower ; but note especially that the Island of Cythera was dedicated to Venus because it was the chief, if not the only Greek island, in which the purple fishery of Tyne was established ; and in our own minds should be marked not only as the most southern fragment of true Greece, but the virtual continuation of the chain of mountains which separate the Spartan from the Argive territories, and are the natural home of the brightest Spartan and Argive beauty which is symbolized in Helen. And, lastly, in accepting for the order this name of Cytherides, you are to remember the names of Viola and Julietta, its two limiting families, as those of Shakespeare's two most loving maids — the two who love simply and to the death : as distinguished from the greater natures in whom earthly Love has its due part and no more ; and farther still from the greatest, in whom the earthly love is quiescent, or subdued, beneath the thoughts of duty and immortality. . . .

. . . Viola and Juliet. Love the ruling power in the entire character : wholly virginal and pure, but quite earthly, and recognizing no other life than his own. Viola is, however far the noblest. Juliet will die unless Romeo loves *her* : . . . Viola is ready to

die for the happiness of the man who does *not* love her . . . enough — if maids know by Proserpina's help, what Shakespeare meant by the dim, and Milton by the glowing, violet.

— *Proserpina*, Vol. II, Chap. I, pp. 181-194.

IF any pretty young Proserpina, escaped from the durance of London, . . . cares to come and walk on the Coniston hills in a summer morning, when the eyebright is out on the high fields, she may gather, with a little help from Brantwood garden, a bouquet of the entire Foxglove tribe in flower, as it is at present defined, and may see what they are like, altogether.

She shall gather: first, the Euphrasy, which makes the turf on the brow of the hill glitter as if with new-fallen manna; then, from one of the blue clusters on the top of the garden wall, the common bright blue Speedwell; and, from the garden bed beneath, a dark blue spire of Veronica Spicata; then, at the nearest opening into the wood, a little foxglove in its first delight of shaking out its bells; then — what next does the Doctor say? — a snap-dragon? — we must go back into the garden for that — here is a goodly crimson one, but what the little speedwell will think of him for a relative I can't think! — a

mullein?—that we must do without for the moment; a monkey flower?—that we will do without altogether; a lady's slipper?—say rather a goblin's with the gout! but, such as the flower-cobbler has made it, here is one of the kind that people praise, out of the greenhouse,—and yet a figwort we must have, too; which I see on referring to London, may be balm-leaved, hemp-leaved, tansy-leaved, nettle-leaved, wing-leaved, heart-leaved, ear-leaved, spear-leaved, or lyre-leaved. I think I can find a balm-leaved one. . . . I'll put a bit of *Teucrium Scordonia* in, to finish: and now—how will my young Proserpina arrange her bouquet, and rank the family relations to their contentment?

She has only one kind of flowers in her hand, as botanical classification stands at present: and whether the system be more rational, or in any human sense more scientific, which puts *calceolaria* and *speedwell* together,—and *foxglove* and *euphrasy*: and runs them on one side into the mints, and on the other into the nightshades:—naming them, meanwhile, some from diseases, some from vermin, some from blockheads, and the rest anyhow;—or the method I am pleading for, which teaches us, watchful

of their seasonable return and chosen abiding places, to associate in our memory the flowers which truly resemble, or fondly companion, or, in time kept by the signs of Heaven, succeed, each other: and to name them in some historical connection with the loveliest fancies and most helpful faiths of the ancestral world — Proserpina be judge; with every maid that sets flower on brow or breast — from Thule to Sicily.

— *Proserpina*, Vol. II, Chap. III, p. 206.

I FOUND the loveliest blue asphodel I ever saw in my life yesterday — a spire two feet high, of more than two hundred stars, the stalks of them all deep blue, as well as the flowers. Heaven send all honest people the gathering of the like, in Elysian fields, some day!

— *Proserpina*, Introduction, p. 12.

THE vast family of plants which, under rain make the earth green for man, and, under sunshine, give him bread, and, in their springing in the early year, mixed with their native flowers, have given us the thought and word of "spring," divide themselves broadly into three great groups — the grasses, sedges, and rushes. The grasses are essentially a clothing for healthy and pure ground, watered by

occasional rain, but in itself dry, and fit for all cultivated pasture and corn. They are distinctively plants with round and jointed stems, which have long green flexible leaves, and heads of seed, independently emerging from them. The sedges are essentially the clothing of waste and more or less poor or uncultivable soils, coarse in their structure, frequently triangular in stem — hence called “acute” by Virgil — and with their heads of seed not extricated from their leaves. Now, in both the sedges and grasses, the blossom has a common structure, though undeveloped in the sedges, but composed always of groups of double husks, which have mostly a spinous process in the centre, sometimes projecting into a long awn or beard; this central process being characteristic also of the ordinary leaves of mosses, as if a moss were a kind of ear of corn made permanently green on the ground, and with a new and distinct fructification. But the rushes differ wholly from the sedge and grass in their blossom structure. It is not a dual cluster, but a twice threefold one, so far separate from the grasses, and so closely connected with a higher order of plants, that I think you will find it convenient to group the rushes with that higher order;

to which, let me give the general name *Drosidæ*, or dew-plants.

These *Drosidæ*, then, are plants delighting in interrupted moisture — moisture which comes either partially or at certain seasons into dry ground. . . . They are often required to retain moisture or nourishment for the future blossom through long times of drought: and this they do in bulbs under ground, of which some become a rude and simple, but most wholesome food for man.

The *Drosidæ* are divided into five great orders — lilies, asphodels, amaryllids, irids, and rushes. No tribe of flowers have had so great, so varied, or so healthy an influence on man . . . depending, not so much on the whiteness of some of their blossoms, or the radiance of others, as on the strength and delicacy of the substance of their petals: enabling them to take forms of faultless elastic curvature, either in cups, as the crocus, or expanding bells, as the true lily, or heath-like bells, as the hyacinth, or bright and perfect stars, like the star of Bethlehem, or, when they are affected by the strange reflex of the serpent nature which forms the labiate group of all flowers, closing into forms of exquisitely fantastic symmetry in the gladiolus. Put by their side their Nereid sisters, the

water-lilies, and you have in them the origin of the loveliest forms of ornamental design, and the most powerful floral myths yet recognized among human spirits, born by the streams of Ganges, Nile, Arno and Avon.

For consider a little what each of these five tribes have been to the spirit of man. First in their nobleness: the Lilies gave the lily of the Annunciation: the Asphodels, the flower of the Elysian fields: the Irids, the fleur-de-lys of chivalry: and the Amaryllids, Christ's lily of the field: while the rush, trodden always under foot, became the emblem of humility. Then take each of the tribes and consider the extent of their lower influence. Perdita's "The crown imperial, lilies of all kinds," are the first tribe; which, giving the type of perfect purity in the Madonna's lily, have, by their lovely form, influenced the entire decorative design of Italian sacred art; while ornament of war was continually enriched by the curves of the triple petals of the Florentine "giglio," and French fleur-de-lys; so that it is impossible to count their influence for good in the middle ages, partly as a symbol of womanly character, and partly of the utmost brightness and refinement of chivalry in the city which was the flower of cities.

Afterwards, the group of the turban-lilies, or tulips, did some mischief, (their splendid stains having made them the favourite caprice of florists;) but they may be pardoned all such guilt for the pleasure they have given in cottage gardens, and are yet to give, when lowly life may be again possible among us; and the crimson bars of the tulips in their trim beds, with their likeness in crimson bars of morning above them, and its dew glittering heavy, globed in their glossy cups, may be loved better than the gray nettles of the ash-heap, under gray sky, unveined by vermillion or by gold.

The next group, of the Asphodels, divides itself also into two principal families; one, in which the flowers are like stars, and clustered characteristically in balls, though opening sometimes into looser heads; and the other, in which the flowers are in long bells, opening suddenly at the lips, and clustered in spires on a long stem, or drooping from it, when bent by their weight. The star-group, of the squills, garlics, and onions, has always caused me great wonder. I cannot understand why its beauty, and serviceableness, should have been associated with the rank scent which has been really among the most powerful means of degrading peasant

life, and separating it from that of the higher classes.

The belled group, of the hyacinth and convallaria, is as delicate as the other is coarse: the unspeakable azure light along the ground of the wood hyacinth in English spring; the grape hyacinth, which is in South France, as if a cluster of grapes and a hive of honey had been distilled and compressed together into one small boss of celled and beaded blue; the lilies of the valley everywhere, in each sweet and wild recess of rocky lands; — count the influence of these on childish and innocent life; then measure the mythic power of the hyacinth and asphodel as connected with Greek thoughts of immortality; finally take their useful and nourishing power in ancient and modern peasant life, and it will be strange if you do not feel what fixed relation exists between the agency of the creating spirit in these, and in us who live by them. It is impossible to bring into any tenable compass for our present purpose, even hints of the human influence of the two remaining orders of Amaryllids and Irids: — only note this generally that while these in northern countries share with the Primulas the fields of spring, it seems that in Greece, the primulaceæ are not an extended tribe, while the crocus, nar-

cissus and *Amaryllis lutea*, the "lily of the field," (I suspect also that the flower whose name we translate "violet" was in truth an *Iris*) represented to the Greek the first coming of the breath of life on the renewed herbage. . . . Later in the year, the *dianthus* (which, though belonging to an entirely different race of plants, has yet a strange look of having been made out of the grasses by turning the sheath-membrane at the root of their leaves into a flower) seems to scatter, in multitudinous families its crimson stars far and wide. But the golden lily and crocus, together with the *asphodel*, retain always the old Greek's fondest thoughts — they are only "golden" flowers that are to burn on the trees, and float on the stream of paradise.

. . . There is one great tribe of plants separate from the rest, and of which the influence seems shed upon the rest in different degrees, and these would give the impression, not so much of having been developed by change, as of being stamped with a character of their own, more or less serpentine or dragon-like. . . . You may take for their principal types the *Foxglove*, *Snapdragon*, and *Calceolaria*, and you will find they all agree in a tendency to decorate themselves by spots, and with bosses or

swollen places in their leaves, as if they had been touched by poison. . . . Then the spirit of these *Draconidæ* seems to pass more or less into other flowers, whose forms are properly pure vases; but it affects some of them slightly,—others not at all. It never strongly affects the heaths: never once the roses; but it enters like an evil spirit into the buttercup, and turns it into a larkspur, with a black, spotted, grotesque center, and a strange, broken blue, gorgeous and intense, yet impure, glittering on the surface as if it were strewn with broken glass, and stained or darkening irregularly into red. And then at last the serpent charm changes the *ranunculus* into monkshood; and makes it poisonous. It enters into the forget-me-not, and the star of heavenly turquoise is corrupted into the viper's bugloss, darkened with the same strange red as the larkspur, and fretted into a fringe of thorn, it enters together with a strange insect-spirit, into the *asphodels*, and they change into spotted *orchideæ*; it touched the poppy, it becomes a *fumaria*, the iris, and it pouts into a *gladiolus*; the lily, and it chequers itself into a snake's-head, and secretes in the deep of its bell, drops not of venom indeed, but honey-dew, as if it were a healing serpent. For there is an *Æscula-*

pian as well as evil serpentry among the Draconidæ . . . and behold, instantly a vast group of herbs for healing . . . full of various balm, and warm strength for healing, yet all of them without splendid honor or perfect beauty, "ground ivies," richest when crushed under the foot; the best sweetness and gentle brightness of the robes of the field,—thyme, and marjoram, and Euphrasy.

—*The Queen of the Air*, Chap. II, pp. 292-298.

GRASS, MOSS AND LICHEN.

THE meadow grass, meshed with fairy rings, is better than the wood pavement cut in hexagons.

— *Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. XXX, p. 346.

WAS this grass of the earth made green for your shroud only, not for your bed? and can you never lie down *upon* it, but only *under* it?

— *Crown of Wild Olives*, Preface, p. 15.

XI.

GRASS, MOSS AND LICHEN.

THE Greek delighted in the grass for its usefulness ; the mediæval, as also we moderns, for its color and beauty. . . . Consider a little what a depth there is in this great instinct of the human race. Gather a single blade of grass, and examine for a minute, quietly, its narrow sword-shaped strip of fluted green. Nothing, as it seems there, of notable goodness or beauty. A very little strength, and a very little tallness, and a few delicate long lines meeting in a point,—not a perfect point neither, but blunt and unfinished, by no means a creditable or apparently much cared for example of Nature's workmanship ; made, as it seems, only to be trodden on to-day, and to-morrow to be cast into the oven ; and a little pale and hollow stalk, feeble and flaccid, leading down to the dull brown fibres of roots. And yet, think of it well, and judge whether of all the gorgeous flowers that beam in summer air, and of all strong and goodly trees, pleasant to the eyes and good for food,—stately palm and pine, strong ash and oak, scented citron, burdened vine,—there be any by man so deeply loved,

by God so highly graced, as that narrow point of feeble green. It seems to me not to have been without a peculiar significance, that our Lord, when about to work the miracle which, of all that He showed, appears to have been felt by the multitude as the most impressive,—the miracle of the loaves,—commanded the people to sit down by companies “upon the green grass.” He was about to feed them with the principal produce of earth and the sea, the simplest representations of the food of mankind. He gave them the *seed* of the herb; He bade them sit down upon the herb itself, which was as great a gift, in its fitness for their joy and rest, as its perfect fruit, for their sustenance; thus, in this single order and act, when rightly understood, indicating for evermore how the Creator had entrusted the comfort, consolation, and sustenance of man, to the simplest and most despised of all the leafy families of the earth. And well does it fulfil its mission. Consider what we owe merely to the meadow grass, to the covering of the dark ground by that glorious enamel, by the companies of those soft and countless, and peaceful spears. The fields! Follow but forth for a little time the thought of all that we ought to recognize in those words.

All spring and summer is in them,— the walks by silent, scented paths,— the rests in noonday heat,— the joy of herds and flocks,— the power of all shepherd life and meditation,— the life of sunlight upon the world, falling in emerald streaks, and falling in soft blue shadows, where else it would have struck upon the dark mould, or scorching dust,— pastures beside the pacing brooks,— soft banks and knolls of lowly hills,— thymy slopes of down overlooked by the blue line of lifted sea,— crisp lawns all dim with early dew, or smooth in evening warmth of barred sunshine, dinted by happy feet, and softening in their fall the sound of loving voices; all these are summed in those simple words; and these are not all. We may not measure to the full the depth of this heavenly gift, in our own land: though still, as we think of it longer, the infinite of that meadow sweetness, Shakespeare's peculiar joy, would open on us more and more, yet we have it but in part. Go out, in the spring-time among the meadows that slope from the shores of the Swiss lakes to the roots of their lower mountains. There, mingled with the taller gentians and the white narcissus, the grass grows deep and free; and as you follow the winding mountain paths, beneath arching boughs

all veiled and dim with blossom,—paths that forever droop and rise over the green banks and mounds sweeping down in scented undulation, steep to the blue water, studded here and there with new mown heaps, filling all the air with fainter sweetness,—look up towards the higher hills, where the waves of everlasting green roll silently into their long inlets among the shadows of the pines; and we may, perhaps, at last know the meaning of those quiet words of the 147th Psalm, “He maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.” There are also several lessons symbolically connected with this subject, which we must not allow to escape us. Observe the peculiar characters of the grass, which adapt it especially for the service of man, are its apparent *humility*, and *cheerfulness*. Its humility, in that it seems created only for lowest service,—appointed to be trodden on, and fed upon. Its cheerfulness, in that it seems to exult under all kinds of violence and suffering. You roll it, and it is stronger the next day; you mow it, and it multiplies its shoots, as if it were grateful; you tread upon it, and it only sends up richer perfume. Spring comes, and it rejoices with all the earth,—glowing with variegated flame of flowers,—waving in soft depth of fruitful

strength. Winter comes, and though it will not mock its fellow plants by growing then, it will not pine and mourn, and turn colorless or leafless as they. It is always green, it is only the brighter and gayer for the hoarfrost. . . .

As the grass of the earth, thought of as the herb yielding seed, leads us to the place where our Lord commanded the multitude to sit down by companies upon the green grass; so the grass of the waters, thought of as sustaining itself among the waters of affliction, leads us to the place where a stem of it was put into our Lord's hand for His sceptre; and in the crown of thorns, and the rod of reed, was foreshown the everlasting truth of the Christian ages—that all glory was to be begun in suffering, and all power in humility.

Assembling the images we have traced, and adding the simplest of all, from Isaiah xl, 6, we find, the grass and flowers are types, in their passing, of the passing of human life, and, in their excellence, of the excellence of human life; and this in a twofold way: first by their Beneficence, and then, by their endurance:—the grass of the earth, in giving the seed of corn, and in its beauty under tread of foot and stroke of scythe; and the

grass of the waters, in giving its freshness for our rest, and in its bending before the wave. But understood in the broad human and Divine sense, the "*herb* yielding seed" (as opposed to the fruit trees yielding fruit) includes a third family of plants and fulfils a third office to the human race. It includes the great family of the lints and flaxes, and fulfils thus the *three* offices of giving food, raiment, and rest. Follow out this fulfilment; consider the association of the linen garment and the linen embroidery, with the priestly office, and the furniture of the tabernacle; and consider how the rush has been, in all time, the first natural carpet thrown under the human foot. Then next observe the three virtues definitely set forth by the three families of plants; not arbitrarily or fancifully associated with them, but in all the three cases marked for us by Scriptural words;

1st. Cheerfulness, or joyful serenity: in the grass for food and beauty — "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin."

2d. Humility; in the grass for rest,— "A bruised reed shall He not break."

3d. Love; in the grass for clothing (because of its swift kindling)— "The smoking flax shall He not quench."

And then, finally, observe, the confirmation of these last two images in, I suppose, the most important prophecy, relating to the future state of the Christian Church, which occurs in the Old Testament, namely, that contained in the closing chapters of Ezekiel. The measures of the Temple of God are to be taken; and because it is only by charity and humility, that those measures ever can be taken, the angel has "a line of *flax* in his hand, and a measuring *reed*." The use of the line was to measure the land, and of the reed to take the dimensions of the buildings; so the buildings of the church, or its labors, are to be measured by *humility*, and its territory or land, by love.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Part IV, Chap. XIV, pp. 285-291.

THE plants which will not work, but only bloom and wander, do not (except the grasses) bring forth fruit of high service, but only the seed that prolongs their race, the grasses alone having great honor put on them for their humility. . . .

This being so, we find another element of very complex effect added to the others which exist in tented plants, namely, that of minute, granular, feathery, or downy seed-vessels, mingling quaint brown punctuation, and dusty

tremors of dancing grain, with the bloom of the nearer fields, and casting a gossamered grayness and softness of plummy mist along their surfaces far away; mysterious evermore, not only with dew in the morning or mirage at noon, but with the shaking threads of fine arborescence, each a little belfry of grain-bells, all a-chime.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. V, Part VI, Chap. X, p. 135.

To trace among the grass and weeds those mysteries of invention and combination, by which Nature appeals to the intellect—to render the delicate fissure, and descending curve, the undulating shadow of the mouldering soil, with gentle and fine finger, like the touch of the rain itself—to find even in all that appears most trifling or contemptible, fresh evidence of the constant working of the Divine power “for glory and for beauty,” and to teach it and to proclaim it to the unthinking and unregardless—this as it is the peculiar province and faculty of the master-mind so it is the peculiar duty which is demanded by the Deity. . . .

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. II, Part II, Sect. IV, Chap. IV, p. 81.

WE have found beauty in the tree yielding fruit, and in the herb yielding seed. How

of the herb yielding *no* seed, the fruitless, flowerless lichen of the rock?

Lichen, and mosses (though these last in their luxuriance are deep and rich as herbage, yet both for the most part humblest of the green things that live,) — how of these? Meek creatures! the first mercy of the earth, veiling with hushed softness its dintless rocks; creatures full of pity, covering with strange and tender honor the scarred disgrace of ruin,—laying quiet finger on the trembling stones, to teach them rest. No words, that I know of, will say what these mosses are. None are delicate enough, none perfect enough, none rich enough. How is one to tell of the rounded bosses of furred and beaming green,—the starred divisions of rubied bloom, fine-filmed, as if the Rock Spirits could spin porphyry as we do glass,—the traceries of intricate silver, and fringes of amber, lustrous, arborescent, burnished through every fibre into fitful brightness and glossy traverses of silken change, yet all subdued and pensive, and framed for simplest, sweetest offices of grace. They will not be gathered, like the flowers, for chaplet or love-token; but of these the wild bird will make its nest, and the wearied child his pillow.

And, as the earth's first mercy, so they are its last gift to us. When all other service is

vain, from plant and tree, the soft mosses and gray lichen take up their watch by the headstone. The woods, the blossoms, the gift-bearing grasses, have done their parts for a time, but these do service forever. Trees for the builder's yard, flowers for the bride's chamber, corn for the granary, moss for the grave.

Yet as in one sense the humblest, in another they are the most honored of the earth-children. Unfading, as motionless, the worm frets them not, and the autumn wastes not. Strong in lowliness, they neither blanch in heat nor pine in frost. To them, slow-fingered, constant-hearted, is entrusted the weaving of the dark, eternal, tapestries of the hills; to them, slow-pencilled, iris-dyed, the tender framing of their endless imagery. Sharing the stillness of the unimpassioned rock, they share also its endurance; and while the winds of departing spring scatter the white hawthorn blossom like drifted snow, and summer dims on the parched meadow the drooping of its cowslip-gold,—far above, among the mountains, the silver lichen-spots rest, starlike, on the stone; and gathering orange stain upon the edge of yonder western peak reflects the sunsets of a thousand years.

OUT of the botanical books I get this general notion of a moss—that it has a fine fibrous root, a stem surrounded with spirally set leaves,—and produces its fruit in a small case, under a cap. I fasten especially, however, on a sentence of Louis Figuier's, about the particular species, *Hypnum*:—

“These mosses, which often form little islets of verdure at the feet of poplars and willows, are robust vegetable organisms, which do not decay.”

“*Qui ne poursissent point.*” What do they do with themselves, then?—it immediately occurs to me to ask. And secondly, — If this immortality belongs to the *Hypnum* only?

It certainly does not, by any means; but however modified or limited, this immortality is the first thing we ought to take note of in the mosses. They are, in some degree, what the “everlasting” is in flowers. . . .

. . . It seems that the upper part of the moss fibre is especially *undecaying* among leaves; and the lower part, especially *decaying*. That, in fact, a plant of moss-fibre is a kind of persistent state of what is, in other plants, annual.

. . . The moss . . . intensifies, and makes perpetual, these two states,—bright leaves

above that never wither, leaves beneath that exist only to wither. . . .

. . . We are all thankful enough — so far as we ever are so — for green moss and yellow moss. But we are never enough grateful for black moss. The golden would be nothing without it, nor even the grey.

— *Proserpina*, Vol. I, Chap. I, pp. 13-19.

By stone-color I suppose we all understand a sort of tawny gray, with too much yellow in it to be called cold, and too little to be called warm. And it is quite true that over enormous districts of Europe, composed of what are technically known as "Jura" and "mountain" limestones, and various pale sandstones, such is generally the color of any freshly broken rock which peeps out along the sides of their gentler hills. It becomes a little grayer as it is colored by time, but never reaches anything like the noble hues of the gneiss and slate; the very lichens which grow upon it are poorer and paler; and although the deep wood mosses will sometimes bury it altogether in golden cushions, the minor mosses, whose office is to decorate and checker the rocks without concealing them, are always more meagrely set on these limestones than on the crystal-lines.

I never have had time to examine and throw into classes the varieties of the mosses which grow on the two kinds of rock, nor have I been able to ascertain whether there are really numerous differences between the species, or whether they only grow more luxuriantly on the crystallines than on the coherents. But this is certain, that on the broken rocks of the foreground in the crystalline groups the mosses seem to set themselves consentfully and deliberately to the task of producing the most exquisite harmonies of color in their power. They will not conceal the form of the rock, but will gather over it in little brown bosses, like small cushions of velvet made of mixed threads of dark ruby silk and gold, rounded over more subdued films of white and gray, with lightly crisped and curled edges like hoar-frost on fallen leaves, and minute clusters of upright orange stalks with pointed caps, and fibres of deep green, and gold, and faint purple passing into black, all woven together, and following with unimaginable fineness of gentle growth the undulation of the stone they cherish, until it is charged with color so that it can receive no more; and instead of looking rugged, or cold, or stern, or anything that a rock is held to be

at heart, it seems to be clothed with a soft, dark leopard skin, embroidered with arabesque of purple and silver. But in the lower ranges this is not so. The mosses grow in more independent spots, not in such a clinging and tender way over the whole surface ; the lichens are far poorer and fewer, and the color of the stone itself is seen more frequently.

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, Part V, Chap. XI, pp. 170, 171.

GOD paints the clouds and shapes the moss-fibres, that men may be happy in seeing Him at His work. . . .

— *Modern Painters*, Vol. III, Part IV, Chap. XVII, p. 381.

HAVE you ever considered the infinite functions of protection to mountain form exercised by the mosses and lichens?

— *Val D'Arno*, Lecture VI, p. 309.

A CHARM OF BIRDS.

WHAT are these blessed feathers? Everything that's best of grass and clouds and chrysoprase. What incomparable little creature wears such things or lets fall?

— *Hortus Inclusus*, pp. 85, 86.

CONSIDER the art of singing, and the simplest perfect master of it (up to the limits of his nature) whom you can find — a skylark. From him you may learn what it is to “sing for joy.”

— *Lecture on Art*, Lecture III, p. 239.

XII.

A CHARM OF BIRDS.

You who care for life as well as literature, and for spirit,—even the poor souls of birds,—as well as lettering of their classes in books,—you, with all care, should cherish the old Saxon-English and Norman-French names of birds, and ascertain them with the most affectionate research,—never despising even the rudest or most provincial forms: all of them will, some day or other, give you clue to historical points of interest.

—*Love's Meinie*, Lecture I, p. 161.

I AM going to invite you to examine, down to almost microscopic detail, the aspect of a small bird, and to invite you to do this, as a most expedient and sure step to your study of the greatest art. . . . Without further preamble, I will ask you to look more carefully than usual, at your well-known favourite—the robin—and to think about him with some precision.

And first, Where does he come from? I have hunted all my books through, and can't tell you how much he is our own, or how far

he is a traveller. And, indeed, are not all our ideas obscure about migration itself? You are broadly told that a bird travels, and how wonderful it is that it finds its way; but you are scarcely ever told, or led to think, what it really travels for — whether for food, for warmth, or for seclusion — and how the travelling is connected with its fixed home. Birds have not their town and country houses. . . . The country in which they build their nests is their proper home,— the country, that is to say, in which they pass the spring and summer. Then they go south in the winter, for food and warmth; but in what lines, and by what stages? The general definition of a migrant in this hemisphere is a bird that goes north to build its nest, and south for the winter; but, then, the one essential point to know about it is the breadth and latitude of the zone it properly inhabits,— that is to say, in which it builds its nest; next, its habit of life, and extent and line of southing in the winter; and finally, its manner of travelling. . . .

In none of the old natural history books can I find any account of the robin as a traveller, but there is, for once, some sufficient reason for their reticence. He has a curious fancy in his manner of travelling.

Of all birds, you would think he was likely to do it in the cheerfulest way, and he does it in the saddest. . . . He always travels in the night, and alone; rests, in the day, wherever day chances to find him: sings a little, and pretends he hasn't been anywhere. . . .

Although there is nothing, or rather because there is nothing, in his plumage, of interest like that of tropical birds, I think it will be desirable for you to learn first from the breast of the robin what a feather is. . . . But before we come to his feathers, I must ask you to look at his bill and his feet.

I do not think it is distinctly enough felt by us that the beak of a bird is not only its mouth, but its hand, or rather its two hands. For, as its arms and hands are turned into wings, all it has to depend upon, in economical and practical life, is its beak. The beak, therefore, is at once its sword, its carpenter's tool-box, and its dressing-case; partly also its musical instrument; all this besides its function of seizing and preparing the food, in which functions alone it has to be a trap, a carving-knife, and teeth, all in one. It is this need of the beak's being a mechanical tool which chiefly regulates the form of a bird's face as opposed to a four-footed animal's. . . .

Since as sword, as trowel, or as pocket-comb, the beak of the bird has to be pointed, the collection of seeds may be conveniently intrusted to this otherwise penetrative instrument, and such food as can be obtained by parting crevices, splitting open fissures, or neatly and minutely picking things up, is allotted, pre-eminently, to the bird species. . . .

You will find that the robin's beak, then, is a very prettily representative one of general bird power. As a weapon, it is very formidable indeed; he can kill an adversary of his own kind with one blow of it in the throat. But I pass on to one of his more special perfections.

He is very notable in the exquisite silence and precision of his movements, as opposed to birds who either creak in flying, or waddle in walking. . . . If you think of it, you will find one of the robin's very chief ingratiatory faculties is his dainty and delicate movement,—his footing it featly here and there. Whatever prettiness there may be in his red breast, at his brightest he can always be outshone by a brickbat. But if he is rationally proud of anything about him, I should think a robin must be proud of his legs. Hundreds of birds have longer and more imposing ones—but for real neatness, finish, and

precision of action, commend me to his fine little ankles, and fine little feet; this long stilted process, as you know, corresponding to our ankle-bone. Commend me, I say, to the robin for use of his ankles—he is, of all birds, the pre-eminent and characteristic Hopper; none other so light, so pert, or so swift. We must not, however, give too much credit to his legs in this matter. A robin's hop is half a flight; he hops very essentially, with wings and tail, as well as with his feet, and the exquisitely rapid opening and quivering of the tail-feathers certainly give half the force to his leap. . . .

. . . And now I return to our main question, for the robin's breast to answer, "What is a feather?" You know something about it already; that it is composed of a quill, with its lateral filaments, terminating generally, more or less, in a point; that these extremities of the quills, lying over each other like the tiles of a house, allow the wind and rain to pass over them with the least possible resistance, and form a protection alike from the heat and the cold; which, in structure much resembling the scale-armour assumed by man for very different objects, is, in fact, intermediate, exactly between the fur of beasts and the scales of fishes; having the

minute division of the one, and the armour-like symmetry and succession of the other.

Not merely symmetry, observe, but extreme flatness. Feathers are smoothed down, as a field of corn by wind with rain; only the swathes laid in beautiful order. They are fur, so structurally placed as to imply, and submit to, the perpetually swift forward motion. . . . The scientific people will tell you that a feather is composed of three parts—the down, the laminae, and the shaft. But the common-sense method of stating the matter is that a feather is composed of two parts, a shaft with lateral filaments. For the greater part of the shaft's length, these filaments are strong and nearly straight, forming by their attachment, a finely warped sail, like that of a windmill. But toward the root of the feather they suddenly become weak, and confusedly flexible, and form the close down which immediately protects the bird's body. . . . The breadth of a robin's breast in brick-red is delicious. . . . Note, however, that the robin's charm is greatly helped by the pretty space of grey plumage which separates the red from the brown back, and sets it off to its best advantage. There is no great brilliancy in it, even so relieved; only the finish of it is exquisite.

If you separate a single feather, you will find it more like a transparent hollow shell than a feather,—grey at the root, where the down is,—tinged, and only tinged, with red at the part that overlaps and is visible; so that, when three or four more feathers have overlapped it again, all together, with their joined red, are just enough to give the colour determined upon, each of them contributing a tinge.

— *Love's Meinie*, Lecture I, pp. 165-175.

CONSIDER also the Swallow,—the bird which lives with you in your own houses, and which purifies for you, from its insect pestilence, the air that you breathe. Thus the sweet domestic thing has done, for men, at least these four thousand years. She has been their companion, not of the home merely, but of the hearth, and the threshold; companion only endeared by departure, and showing better her loving-kindness by her faithful return. Type sometimes of the stranger, she has softened us to hospitality; type always of the suppliant, she has enchanted us to mercy; and in her feeble presence, the cowardice, or the wrath, of sacrilege has changed into the fidelities of sanctuary. Herald of our summer, she

glances through our days of gladness; numberer of our years, she would teach us to apply our hearts to wisdom;—and yet, so little have we regarded her, that this very day, scarcely able to gather from all I can find told of her enough to explain so much as the unfolding of her wings, I can tell you nothing of her life—nothing of her journeying; I cannot learn how she builds, nor how she chooses the place of her wandering, nor how she traces the path of her return. Remaining thus blind and careless to the true ministries of the humble creatures whom God has really sent to serve us, we in our pride, thinking ourselves surrounded by the pursuivants of the sky, can yet only invest them with majesty by giving them the calm of the bird's motion, and shade of the bird's plume; and after all, it is well for us, if, when even for God's best mercies, and in His temples marble-built, we think that, "with angels and arch-angels, and all the company of Heaven we laud and magnify His glorious name"—well for us, if our attempt be not only an insult, and His ears open rather to the inarticulate and unintended praise, of "the Swallow, twittering from her straw-built shed." — *Love's Meinie*, Lecture II, pp. 204, 205.

THERE is a bird singing outside. . . . Making the air sure it is summer, a dove cooing very low, and absolutely nothing else to be heard. — *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. II, Letter XLVI, p. 277.

THE winter has been long and hard with us. . . . Even the snowdrops are hardly venturing out of the earth. But the birds have come back, and to-day I hear the woodpeckers knocking at the doors of the old trees to find a shelter and home for the summer.

. . . Behind the hayfield where the grass in spring grew fresh and deep, there used to be always a corncrake or two in it. Twilight after twilight I have hunted that bird, and never once got a glimpse of it: the voice was always at the other side of the field, or in the inscrutable air or earth.

— *Præterita*, Vol. III, Chap. IV, pp. 425-457.

You cannot so much as once look at the ruffings of the plumes of a pelican pluming itself after it has been in the water, or carefully draw the contours of the wing either of a vulture or a common swift, or paint the rose and vermilion of that of a flamingo, without receiving almost a new conception of the meaning of form and color in creation.

— *Lectures on Art*, Lecture IV, p. 265.

NO AIR is sweet that is silent: it is only sweet when full of low currents of under sound—triplets of birds, and murmur and chirp of insects. — *Ad Valorem*, Essay IV, p. 224.

NOTE the quivering or vibration of the air . . . first, and most intense, in the voice and throat of the bird: which is the air incarnate. . . . Is it not strange to think of the influence of this one power. . . . vibration? . . . How much of the repose—how much of the wrath, folly, and misery of men, has literally depended on this one power of the air:—on the sound of the trumpet and the bell—on the *lark's song*, and the bee's murmur.

— *The Queen of the Air*, I, p. 272.

SEAGULLS floating high in the blue, like little dazzling boys' kites. — *Hortus Inclusus*, p. 37.

THE sparrows and the robins, if you give them leave to nest as they choose about your garden, will have their own opinions about your garden: some of them will think it well laid out,—others ill. You are not solicitous about their opinions: but you like them to love each other; to build their nests without stealing each other's sticks, and to trust you to take care of them.

— *Fors Clavigera*, Vol. I, Letter XII, p. 162.

THE owl, a bird which seems to surpass all other creatures in acuteness of organic perception, its eye being calculated to observe objects which to all others are enveloped in darkness, its ear to hear sounds distinctly, and its nostrils to discriminate effluvia with such nicety that it has been deemed prophetic from discovering the putridity of death even in the first stages of disease.

— *The Queen of the Air*, II, p. 301.

WHATEVER wise people may say of them — I at least myself have found the owl's cry prophetic of mischief to me.

— *Præterita*, Vol. II, Chap. X, p. 347.

WOODCOCK? Yes, I suppose, and never before noticed the *sheath* of his bill going over the front of the lower mandible, that he may dig comfortably! But the others! the glory of velvet and silk and cloud and light, and black and tan and gold, and golden sand and dark tresses, and purple shadows, and moors and mists, and night and starlight, and woods and wilds, and dells and deeps, and every mystery of heaven and its fingerwork, is in those little birds' backs and wings.

— *Hortus Inclusus*, p. 57.

I HAVE seen the most wonderful of all Alpine birds—a gray, fluttering, stealthy creature, about the size of a sparrow, but of colder gray and more graceful, which haunts the sides of the fiercest torrents. There is something more strange in it than in the sea-gull—*that* seems a powerful creature: and the power of the sea, not of a kind so adverse, so hopelessly destructive: but this small creature, silent, tender and light, almost like a moth in its low and irregular flight—almost touching with its wings the crests of the waves that would overthrow a granite wall, and haunting the hollows of the black, cold, herbless rocks that are continually shaken by their spray, has perhaps the nearest approach to the look of a spiritual existence I know in animal life.

— *Præterita*, Vol. II, Chap. XI, p. 356.

BROADLY . . . birds range—with relation to their flight—into three great classes: the *sailing* birds, who, having given themselves once a forward impulse, can rest, merely with their wings open, on the winds and clouds: the properly so-called *flying* birds, who must *strike* with their wings, no less to sustain themselves than to advance; and lastly, the *fluttering* birds, who can keep their wings

quivering like those of a fly, and therefore pause at will, in one spot in the air, over a flower, or over their nest. And of these three classes, the first are necessarily large birds (frigate-bird — albatross, condor and the like); the second of average bird-size, falling chiefly between the limiting proportion of the swallow and seagull: for a smaller bird than the swift has not power enough over the air, and a larger one than the seagull has not power enough over its wings, to be a perfect flyer. Finally, the birds of vibratory wing are all necessarily minute, represented chiefly by the humming birds; but sufficiently even by our own smaller and sprightlier pets; the robin's quiver of his wing in leaping, for instance, is far too swift to be distinctly seen. These are the three main divisions of the birds for whom the function of the wing is mainly *flight*.

But to us, human creatures, there is a class of birds more pathetically interesting — those in whom the function of the wing is essentially, not flight, but the protection of their young.

Of these, the two most familiar to us are the domestic fowl and the partridge: and there is nothing in arrangement of plumage approaching the exquisiteness of that in the

vaulted roof of their expanded *covering* wings: nor does anything I know in decoration rival the consummate art of the minute cirrus-clouding of the partridge's breast.

— *The Laws of Fésolé*, Chap. VI, p. 51.

THE perfect and simple grace of bird form, in general, has rendered it a favorite subject with early sculptors, and with these schools which loved form more than action. . . . Half the ornaments, at least, in Byzantine architecture, and a third of that of Lombardic, is composed of birds, either pecking at fruit, or flowers, or standing on either side of a flower or vase, or alone, as generally the symbolical peacock. But how much of our general sense of grace or power of motion, of serenity, peacefulness, and spirituality, we owe to these creatures it is impossible to conceive: their wings supplying us with almost the only means of representation of spiritual motion which we possess and with an ornamental form of which the eye is never weary, however meaningless or endlessly repeated.

— *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. XX, p. 233.

THE BIRD.— It is little more than the drift of the air brought into form by plumes; the air is in all its quills, it breathes through its

whole frame and flesh, and glows with air in its flying, like blown flame: it rests upon the air, subdues it, surpasses it, outraces it:—*is* the air, conscious of itself, conquering itself, ruling itself.

Also, into the throat of the bird is given the voice of the air. All that in the wind itself is weak, wild, useless in sweetness, is knit together in its song. As we may imagine the wild form of the cloud closed into the perfect form of the bird's wings, so the wild voice of the cloud into its ordered and commanded voice; unwearied, rippling through the clear heaven in its gladness, interpreting all intense passion through the soft spring nights, bursting into acclaim and rapture of choir at daybreak, or lisping and twittering among the boughs and hedges through the heat of the day, like little winds that only make the cowslip bells shake, and ruffle the petals of the wild rose.

Also upon the plumes of the bird are put the colors of the air: on these the gold of the cloud that cannot be gathered by any covetousness: the rubies of the clouds—the vermilion of the cloud-bar, and the flame of the cloud-crest, and the snow of the cloud, and its shadow, and the melted blue of the deep wells of the sky—all these, seized by the

creating spirit, and woven by Athena herself into films and threads of plume; with wave on wave following, and fading along breast, and throat, and opened wings, infinite as the dividing of the foam and the shifting of the sea-sand;—even the white down of the cloud seeming to flutter up between the stronger plumes, seen, but too soft for touch.

And so the Spirit of the Air is put into, and upon this created form; and it becomes, through twenty centuries, the symbol of divine help, descending, as the Fire to speak, but as the Dove, to bless.

— *The Queen of the Air*, II, p. 284.

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